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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

NO. 432. FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 10TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

What to Eat, Drink, and Avoid.

BY A MEDICAL MAN.

Diet.—Under this head we will consider what is the best. Every man or woman must be a law unto themselves as to what to eat, drink, and avoid. The saying, "One man's meat is another man's poison," is very true, and the time of year and the climatic surroundings have much to say in the matter. In the Arctic regions you can eat and relish fats or fat mixtures such as would be fatal to you in the tropics. Why do our countrymen suffer so much from liver complaint? It is because our insular training in the British Isles has induced a love for roast beef, spirits, and strong beers, and we indulge in these with one result: ***liver*** complaint. Were we only rational, and adapted our diet to our surroundings, we would lead healthier, happier lives. Were we to a great extent to shun animal food we would be healthier.

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 432.] For the Week ending April 10th, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

The Publisher, the Author, and the Duchess.

The Study of a Deep Plot.

ALTHOUGH I broke into my friend Hawtree's room in a manner that was not remarkable for its gentleness, it did not seem to disturb him in the least, for he continued calmly reading the book that he held in his hand, in which he appeared deeply engrossed.

This fact was suspicious in itself, for Hawtree is not a man to take up a novel in the small hours of the morning. It seemed evident to me that he had recognised my step on the stairs, and having a history prepared about the book, he had taken it up as an excuse for telling the tale.

I hesitated a moment whether to advance or retire. Then I thought that the day was yet young, and Hawtree's stories were worth the hearing, and his cigars were very good.

So I ventured on a cough. Hawtree continued reading. I tried again to attract his attention.

"Well, old man," I said heartily, "good-evening. I thought I would just look in as I was passing."

Still it pleased Hawtree's plans to ignore my presence, and it was not until I had crossed the room and stood directly between him and the light that he deigned to look up with a very well feigned start of surprise.

"Well," he said, springing to his feet, and shaking hands heartily, "I declare I never saw you come in. Why didn't you speak? Sit down, man, and make yourself at home."

He turned down the leaf he was reading of his precious book with much ostentation, and with a sigh laid it regretfully on the floor.

"Studying?" I suggested.

"No," he replied, "just peeping into a little book that has been unopened on my shelf for about five years. It was a most extraordinary thing altogether," he continued, gazing meditatively at the fire.

"What," I enquired, "was extraordinary?"

"Why," said Hawtree, "that I should meet the author of this book this evening as he was coming down the steps of the Empire. A man, mind you, that one has not heard of for five years, although at one time his reputation was world-wide. You know him by name, no doubt. James-James, the man who wrote 'Stones of Great Value.'"

"James-James? I don't know him," said I.

"You don't know James-James?" cried Hawtree. "You have never heard of 'Stones of Great Value'?" He sprang to his feet, and his voice fairly shrieked with excitement. He took up the book, and showed me the number of editions it had run into, then threw it on the floor, and would have raved about the ignorance of the modern man of letters for the rest of the night, had I not calmed him.

"You must remember," I said, "that we are not all so well up in men and things as you are, and that we journalists have to discuss so many subjects in the course of the year, that it is not surprising that we forget about them all. Now sit down and calm yourself, and tell me all about it from beginning to end."

"It's a long story," said Hawtree, sinking back in his chair, "but when a journalist comes to me, and tells me he has never heard of James-James, I certainly think it is time that I should refresh his memory for his own good. Besides," he continued, gradually getting under weigh, "it's a story of your own trade; the story of a great 'boom'; the first boom in literature of modern days. For it is only quite recently, you understand, that men took to making little wars on their own accounts, and exploring out-of-the-way lands, and writing books on the subjects, and making their fortunes in this way.

"The beginning of James-James' literary career, then," went on Hawtree, while I was feeling for my notebook and pencil, "was the orthodox beginning of famous writers. He threw up a good trade, invested in a garret, a ream of foolscap, and a shilling's-worth of ink and pens, and proceeded to waste them as fast as human hands could work. His stories went the orthodox round of publishing houses, and returned to him in the orthodox way, having gained nothing but a vast accumulation of dirt. He came to the end of his resources, starved for a day, and was just giving up in despair when an idea suddenly took birth in his mind, which he immediately put on paper and sent out on its travels. It returned to him, of course, and after living for half a year on his landlady's money he took it to the last publisher he could think of, who gave more hope than the others—all in the orthodox way.

"This publisher, you must know, had just set up business when James-James called on him, and had plenty of time in which to read stories by unknown authors, and plenty of knowledge in his trade to recognise a good investment when it came in his way.

"He promised to read Hawtree's novel, and let him hear in a day or two what he thought of it. He read through the story, and having satisfied himself that it might make a book under certain conditions, and that those conditions would never be realised, he sent round for its author.

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"'This book,' he said, smiling sweetly at James-James as he stood expectantly before him, thus raising his hopes to the utmost, 'is a very good book, but,' he continued, dashing all hopes to the ground, 'would probably, under the ordinary conditions, have no sale at all.'

"James-James' face turned pale.

"'What do you say,' he stammered, 'it is a good book, and yet it would have no sale? How can that be?'

"'It is a book, you see,' replied the Publisher, 'that people would take no notice of unless it were forced under their eyes. In fact, it is a book that must be "boomed" to go. It must be forced along, shoved, hurried into attention, have some scandal raised about it, so that it can't be disregarded. Unless we can do that, all that remains for your book is this——' and the publisher kicked a new waste-paper basket in which he had invested, and James-James groaned aloud.

"When he had gone the Publisher lit a cigarette, and fell to considering again the manuscript that lay before him. And the more he thought about it the more he was determined that there was merit in the book, and merit, properly applied, that would not only make its author's fortune, but make him, the Publisher, both rich and famous. Then he wavered again, and determined that it was too risky a venture for a new publisher to undertake, and he threw away his cigarette, put the book aside, and began reading the morning paper.

"As he glanced down the columns a certain little paragraph caught his eye. It ran as follows: 'The Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels are not only the most beautiful, but among the most valuable in London at the present time. They are valued at £50,000, although the Duchess would not part with them for more than twice that sum. They have been in the family for a long while, and she looks upon them almost as sacred heirlooms.'

"Now, James-James' novel, 'Stones of Great Value,' was entirely founded on the idea of a great jewel robbery, and it was for this reason that the paragraph I have quoted caught the Publisher's eye. And the stones of great value of James-James' estimation were set down as being worth about the same amount as the Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels—and the jewels of the story also belonged to a duchess. All that was required to complete the resemblance between fiction and reality was for the genuine duchess to be robbed of her stones.

"The thought that it would be rather curious if this should happen by any strange chance occurred to the Publisher. And as he was thinking an idea came to him.

"He leant back in his chair, and closed his eyes, and the possibilities of the idea passed before him. Never for an instant did it leave his mind for the remainder of the day. He took it away with him at night, and thought of it, and dreamt of it—this great idea.

"On the following day he went through all the daily and weekly papers on which he could lay his hands, and every now and again he came across a little paragraph about the Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels. It was evident that these paragraphs, praising the beauty of the stones, estimating their great value, and declaring them to be the sacred heirlooms of an old family, were, one and all, written by one hand, and that hand, a woman's; none other, in fact, than that of the Duchess of Dawsborough herself.

"Having satisfied himself that Her Grace was striving very hard to advertise her jewels, for what purpose she alone knew, and always with his great idea in his mind, the Publisher set about finding out all that he could concerning the stones in question.

"It was not long before he discovered that Her Grace had purchased them from a leading merchant only a few months previously. He also discovered that the Duchess herself was an American heiress, who had followed the fashion of marrying a Duke for his title, and that now that he was dead she was trying her utmost to make her way into English society.

"All this fitted in very well with the plans that the Publisher had devised.

"Having come to this conclusion, he sent again for his friend the Author—for in their mutual lack of money, and their mutual desire to gain it, a kind of friendship had sprung up between them.

"James-James came—in a cab.

"For three hours the two men remained closeted, with their heads together, talking. Then James-James went out and ordered an oyster supper, while the Publisher swung round on his pivot chair, and wrote the smartest business letter that he had ever penned—a letter so forcible, cunning, and clearly put, that it could not fail to carry effect. Having read this through, and satisfied himself that it lacked nothing, he put it in an envelope, and addressed it to 'Her Grace the Duchess of Dawsborough.'

"The reply came by return of post in a scented, heavily-crested letter.

"'Dear Mr. Publisher,' it ran, 'Your letter to hand. What a funny idea! You had better come and have tea, and tell me all about it.—Yours sincerely, Dolly Dawsborough.'

"Accordingly, the Publisher went to tea that afternoon.

"He found the Duchess in a room that seemed literally to teem with silver; every other object seemed plated with gold. He trod on a carpet that sank like a bed of feathers beneath his feet. A large, American-looking hand was held out to him, almost covered with rings. He took it mechanically, and found a pretty, merry face above—a very jolly face for a Duchess.

"The Publisher recovered himself quickly. He immediately let off the compliment with which he had prepared himself on the way.

"'I am delighted to note,' he muttered, bowing low, 'by your letter that I received to-day, that the business qualities of the Duchess of Dawsborough are not less deserving of praise than her beauty.'

"Her Grace laughed merrily, and clapped her hands.

"'Now, that's real nice of you,' she replied, 'for I have always reckoned that I am about as smart a business woman as they make. Didn't I hook the Duke and his title within a fortnight, in spite of all the bets that were made at the clubs? Now he poor fellow, has been carried off by his gout, I am thrown on my own resources to get along as best I may.'

"'I notice,' said the Publisher, 'that your jewels have already become famous.'

"'That's so. When the Duke died I bought all the jewels and trinkets that I could find. That's what you English seem to admire more than anything else. A woman with jewels is bound to succeed. Though somehow,' added her Grace with a sigh, 'your society ladies don't exactly seem to rush to me with open arms.'

"'You must remember,' said the Publisher, 'that, famous as they are, everyone has not yet heard of your jewels.'

"'That's quite true. Say, Mr. Publisher, how am I to get them known?'

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"The Duchess sipped her tea from a priceless little blue china cup, and looked meditatively over the rim at the Publisher.

"'It was for the purpose of telling you how to do that,' replied he, 'that I called this afternoon. If you will leave everything to me I will guarantee that within three weeks the Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels will be more talked about than any other jewels in London.'

"'La,' cried the Duchess, executing a *pas de seul*, 'and how much do you want for doing that?'

"'Only two little things. First, that you will promise not to allow your jewels to be seen by anyone until I tell you you may; second, that you will procure a dummy set before to-morrow.'

"'Done,' cried the Duchess. 'Anything else?'

"'In the afternoon I shall ask you to go for a drive. Before you go I want you to tell your secretary, steward, butler, anyone you like, that you are going to take your jewels to the bankers. Circulate it among your household, so that everyone is talking about it. Do you think you are a good enough actress to do all that without arousing suspicion?'

"'Rather!' The Duchess elevated her toe, and contemplated it. 'First an actress, then a millionairess, then a widow, then a duchess——'

"'Then,' added the Publisher, 'the first lady in English society; second only to the Queen herself.'

"'When will the fun begin?' she asked eagerly.

"'To-morrow evening,' said the other. 'But you must be very careful. How do you think these headings will look in the papers?'

"The Publisher produced some carefully written manuscripts, and laid them before the Duchess. The headlines were startling enough: 'The Duchess of Dawsborough's Jewels—Stolen—Valued at £50,000—The Duchess Inconsolable—Clever Robbery—No Trace of the Thief—Scotland Yard Baffled.' Following these were several striking accounts of the robbery, of the jewels, and the Duchess, sufficiently exciting to produce a flutter among the evening papers, to which they would be dispatched.

"The Duchess was delighted.

"'But what am I to do with my diamonds?' she inquired.

"'Bury them,' said the Publisher, 'or hide them somewhere where no one will find them. If anyone suspects it is a trick we shall be ruined for ever. I implore your Grace to be careful.'

"'You may trust me. Now, is there anything else I can do for you? A thousand or two don't make much odds to me, you know.'

"'Thanks. I certainly have a little scheme on hand that requires financing. I am going to publish my first book very shortly. As I told you in my letter it's all part of my scheme. The book deals entirely with a jewel robbery, and the jewels are supposed to be yours. When all the excitement is over, the book will be published, and everyone will read it. The whole affair, your Grace, is a gigantic boom; first for a duchess, then for an author, and lastly for a publisher. And it all requires financing.'

"'Well, how much do you want?'

"The Publisher named a modest sum. The Duchess promised to forward it, on receiving security that the Publisher would carry out his part of the bargain. After going through the scheme carefully once more he took up his hat and said good-bye.

"On the day following the one on which the Publisher called on the Duchess of Dawsborough, her Grace procured a dummy set of diamonds from a small jeweller.

"Having given her order she returned home, and gradually made it generally known among her household that in the afternoon she would take her jewels to the bankers.

"About one o'clock the imitation stones arrived, and her Grace sat down to as hearty a luncheon as ever a Duchess consumed. She ordered her carriage for half-past two.

"'Tell them to drive to the bank,' she said, as she stood on the steps. 'I am going to leave my jewel-box there.'

"'To the bank,' whispered the butler to the footman.

"'To the bank,' said the footman to the coachman, 'Her Grace is going to lock up her jewels.'

"And the carriage drove away.

"Apparently, however, the Duchess changed her mind, for she gave orders to be driven first to an outlying district, where it was imperative that she should pay some early calls.

"'I will go to the bank on my way home,' said she.

"In the meanwhile an incident had occurred at the Duchess of Dawsborough's residence. It seemed that the carriage had barely turned the corner of the street, when Her Grace discovered that she had left her jewel-box behind. She had apparently sent her footman running back to bring her the precious box, for a man, who, it afterwards transpired, was disguised in every particular as her footman, requested the butler to give him Her Grace's case, which, as he declared, she had left on her dressing-table.

"The butler ran upstairs, and found the box, and hastened with it to the footman, who hurriedly carried it away down the street.

"That, however, was the last that was ever seen of the rascal.

"About four o'clock the Duchess had finished her calls, and ordered: 'Home.'

"She was reminded by her servant that she had wished to call at the bank.

"'Oh, yes, to the bank,' she replied, and then: 'Why, dear me, I must have left my jewel-box behind. How careless! Well, I will take it to-morrow.'

"The Duchess had come out a long way to pay her calls, and it was nearly six before the carriage neared home.

"It was then she heard the newsboys calling her name in the street. 'The Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels,' they cried, 'stolen—valued at £50,000—clever robbery—evening paper!'

"She procured a copy, and the coachman, with a white face, galloped the horses homewards.

"Holding the paper as best she could with the jolting of the carriage, her Grace read the account of the imaginary robbery of her jewels, which, in reality, as she well knew, were snugly stowed away in the family safe. She smiled as she thought how smartly the Publisher had done his work.

"Her secretary met her at the door of the house and hastily began explaining things. A man, disguised as her footman, had discovered—how Heaven alone knew, 'although,' said the secretary, 'suspicion pointed to the butler as having helped him'—that her Grace had left her jewel-box behind her. He had received the box from the butler and had gone off with the stones. Another mystery—an account of the whole affair had appeared in the evening newspapers.

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"Never, even in her ballet-girl days, had the Duchess acted so brilliantly as when she ordered her whole household up before her and questioned them as to the robbery of her jewels. All, however, to no effect. The mystery was as unexplainable as ever, and the Duchess left it to the police and the press to discover what they could.

"The latter took up the matter eagerly. It had come at a time when news was scarce, and the public seemed deeply interested in the jewel robbery. On the next day the papers that claimed to have discovered a clue sold like wild-fire. Some accused the butler, some the footman, others Her Grace's secretary of having stolen the jewels. Their movements were carefully watched by the police, but all with no result. The whole affair was as pretty a mystery as had ever puzzled the public, and the press made the most of it. The Duchess's jewels were being 'boomed' as jewels were never 'boomed' before.

"Three days later public interest was beginning to flag, for nothing new turned up.

"On the evening of the third day the Publisher and the Author met together over a little dinner in the former's rooms.

"Over the wine the Publisher remarked: 'To-morrow, I think I shall arrest you.'

"For a man about to be arrested, however, James-James appeared to take the matter very coolly.

"'You think it is the best time?' he remarked flicking the ash from his cigarette.

"'I think so. Public interest is beginning to flag a little. I will come about twelve, if you will be up by then. I want you to be gazing meditatively down the muzzle of a revolver, and to babble like a baby about a jewel robbery and a confession and suicide. Think you can manage all that?'

"'Easily,' said James-James; 'every author is three-parts actor.'

"'Good. I shall judge whether your arrest causes a sensation or not. If so, I shall leave things for a day or two before I have you released. Or if the magistrates are too sharp for us, and begin to suspect that it is all a put up affair, I shall hurry things on to a crisis. Anyway, you may rest assured that they won't keep you more than a day or two, for it wouldn't be safe to let them. By the way, you might as well copy out this confession now.'

"The publisher took a new book, uncut, and looking as though it had come straight from the press, called 'Stones of Great Value,' by James-James, and, opening it at a certain page, handed it to the author.

"On this page the principal character in the story confessed to having stolen the stones of the fictitious Duchess. 'Dear friend,' ran the confession, 'I can no longer live while another man is suspected of having committed a crime of which I am guilty. I have decided to solve two mysteries by blowing out my brains. For it was I who stole the Duchess's jewels. When this reaches you I shall be dead.' There was much more of the same kind, and at the foot of the confession were the initials 'J. J.,' which, should the page be found lying about loose, might either be taken for the name of the hero of the story or for James-James, the name of the author of the book. It might, indeed, be rather awkward for James-James if the confession of the hero in 'Stones of Great Value,' written in the author's own handwriting, and signed with his initials, should fall into the hands of the police at a time when the genuine Duchess of Dawsborough had really lost her diamonds.

"He began to copy out the confession on a piece of foolscap, so that it began at the top of the page, and ended with his initials at the bottom. When he had finished it he handed it over to the Publisher, who put it safely away.

"'To-morrow,' he cried, 'our plans will be reaching their fulfilment. We have boomed the Duchess' diamonds, and to-morrow you will be boomed, and three days later your book. Let us drink to unqualified success.'

"On the following day a man, dishevelled, waving a paper, rushed wildly into the nearest police-station to James-James' lodgings.

"'See,' he cried, 'here is a confession of the man who stole the Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels. Come and take him, quick, before he blows out his brains. A friend of mine, James-James by name, a bit of an author,' and before the astonished constables had time to realise the state of affairs, they found themselves being hurried along in a cab to James-James' rooms.

"The door was locked. A policeman put his shoulder to it, and burst it open. At a table, muttering incoherently to himself, was the author of 'Stones of Great Value.' To knock away the pistol, and to handcuff him, was the work of a moment.

"That evening the whole report of the thief's arrest appeared in the papers. Public excitement was again roused to its utmost. When the James-James trial came on the court was crowded.

"Nothing could be gained from the prisoner, for he could only mutter senseless words about a book and a confession. This confession was the sole evidence that there was against him. As the magistrates remarked, it seemed much more likely that either the butler or the secretary had done the deed. The magistrates were about to remand the prisoner for a week, in order that the police might make enquiries about the confession, the people were rising from their seats to leave the court, when something happened that drew every eye from the prisoner to the figure of a man who now appeared in the court, and caused a sensation that has not yet been forgotten by the police.

"'Your worships,' said a police inspector, stepping forward, 'I wish to make an important statement. This gentleman, a book publisher, informs me that the confession, on the strength of which the prisoner was arrested, is *merely the stray leaf out of a novel he was writing.* The poor gentleman, thinking, no doubt, that the Publisher had refused his work, had temporarily lost his mind, and this accounts for the reason why he was not able to clear himself from the ridiculous charge of robbery. The book, your worships, deals entirely with a jewel robbery, and is called 'Stones of Great Value.'

"And that," said Hawtree, "is the end of my story. The plot has gradually unfolded itself. The Publisher's great idea has worked itself out to the end. He had boomed the Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels; the Author's name was in every mouth; thousands of copies of the book were sold; Author, Publisher, and Duchess were made famous.

"As I told you, I met James-James to-day on the steps of the Empire, fat and well-fed. And what seems the most remarkable part of the whole affair to me is that this book, 'Stones of Great Value,' was once world famous, and is now almost totally forgotten."

It occurred to me, as I crept out of Hawtree's rooms at the break of day, that even this fact was not so remarkable as Hawtree's imagination.

Marcus Tindal.

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From March 18th to May 20th, 1799—for more than sixty days and nights, that is—a little, half-forgotten, and more than half-ruined Syrian town was the scene of one of the fiercest and most dramatic sieges recorded in military history.

And rarely has there been a struggle so apparently one-sided. A handful of British sailors and Turkish irregulars were holding Acre, a town without regular defences against Napoleon, the most brilliant military genius of his generation, with an army of 10,000 war-hardened veterans, the "Army of Italy"—soldiers who had dared the snows of the Alps and conquered Italy, and to whom victory was a familiar experience.

In their ranks military daring had reached, perhaps, its very highest point. And yet the sailors inside that ring of crumbling wall won! At the blood-stained trenches of Acre Napoleon experienced his first defeat; and, years after, at St. Helena, he said of Sir Sidney Smith, the gallant sailor who baffled him: "That man made me miss my destiny."

It is a curious fact that one Englishman thwarted Napoleon's career in the East, and another ended his career in the West, and it may be doubted which of the two Napoleon hated most—Wellington, who finally overthrew him at Waterloo, or Sidney Smith, who, to use Napoleon's own words, made him "miss his destiny," and exchange the empire of the East for a lonely pinnacle of rock in the Atlantic.

Sidney Smith was a sailor of the school of Nelson and of Dundonald—a man, that is, with a spark of that war-like genius which begins where mechanical rules end. He was a man of a singular physical beauty, with a certain magnetism and fire about him which made men willing to die for him, and women who had never spoken to him fall headlong in love with him.

His whole career is curiously picturesque. He became a middy at the tender age of eleven; went through fierce sea-fights, and was actually mate of the watch when fourteen years old. He was a fellow-middy with William IV. in the fight off Cape St. Vincent, became commander when he was eighteen years of age, and captain before he was quite nineteen.

But the British Marine, even in those tumultuous days, scarcely yielded enough of the rapture of fighting to this post-captain in his teens. He took service under the Swedish flag, saw hard fighting against the Russians, became the close personal friend of the King, and was knighted by him.

One of the feats at this period of his life with which tradition, with more or less of plausibility, credits Sidney Smith, is that of swimming by night through the Russian fleet, a distance of two miles, carrying a letter enclosed in a bladder to the Swedish Admiral.

Sidney Smith afterwards entered the Turkish service. When war broke out betwixt France and England in 1790 he purchased a tiny craft at Smyrna, picked up in that port a hybrid crew, and hurried to join Lord Hood, who was then holding Toulon. When the British abandoned the port—and it is curious to recollect that the duel between Sidney Smith and Napoleon, which reached its climax at Acre, began here—Sidney Smith volunteered to burn the French fleet, a task which he performed with an audacity and skill worthy of Dundonald or Nelson, and for which the French never forgave him.

Sidney Smith was given the command of an English frigate, and fought a dozen brilliant fights in the Channel. He carried with his boats a famous French privateer off Havre de Gracel, but during the fight on the deck of the captured ship it drifted into the mouth of the Seine above the forts. The wind dropped, the tide was too strong to be stemmed, and Sidney Smith himself was captured.

He had so harried the French coast that the French refused to treat him as an ordinary prisoner of war, and threw him into that ill-omened prison, the Temple, from whose iron-barred windows the unfortunate sailor watched for two years the horror of the Reign of Terror in its last stages, the tossing crowds, the tumbrils rolling past, crowded with victims for the guillotine.

Sidney Smith escaped at last by a singularly audacious trick. Two confederates, dressed in dashing uniform, one wearing the dress of an adjutant, and the other that of an officer of still higher rank, presented themselves at the Temple with forged orders for the transfer of Sidney Smith.

The governor surrendered his prisoner, but insisted on sending a guard of six men with him. The sham adjutant cheerfully acquiesced, but, after a moment's pause, turned to Sidney Smith, and said if he would give his parole as an officer not to attempt to escape they would dispense with the escort.

Sidney Smith, with due gravity, replied to his confederate:

"Sir, I swear on the faith of an officer to accompany you wherever you choose to conduct me."

The governor was satisfied, and the two sham officers proceeded to "conduct" their friend with the utmost despatch to the French coast.

Another English officer who had escaped—Captain Wright—joined Sidney Smith outside Rouen, and the problem was how to get through the barriers without a passport. Smith sent Wright on first, and he was duly challenged for his passport by the sentinel; whereupon Sidney Smith, with a majestic air of official authority, marched up and said in faultless Parisian French:

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"I answer for this citizen; I know him."

Whereupon the deluded sentinel saluted and allowed them both to pass.

Sidney Smith's escape from the Temple made him a popular hero in England. He was known to have great influence with the Turkish authorities, and he was sent to the East in the double office of Envoy Extraordinary to the Porte and Commander of the Squadron at Alexandria. By one of the curious coincidences which marked Sidney Smith's career, he became acquainted while in the Temple with a French Royal officer named Philippeaux, an engineer of signal ability, and who had been a school-fellow and a close friend of Napoleon himself at Brienne.

Smith took his French chum with him to the East, and he played a great part in the defence of Acre—Napoleon had swept north through the desert to Syria, had captured Gaza and Jaffa, and was about to attack Acre, which lay between him and his ultimate goal, Constantinople. Here Sidney Smith resolved to bar his way, and in his flagship the *Tigre*, with the *Theseus*, under Captain Miller, and two gunboats, he sailed to Acre to assist in its defence.

Philippeaux took charge of the fortifications, and thus, in the breaches of a remote Syrian town, the quondam prisoner of the Temple and the ancient school-friend of Napoleon joined hands to wreck that dream of a great eastern empire which lurked in the cells of Napoleon's masterful intellect.

Acre represents a blunted arrow-head jutting out from a point in the Syrian coast. Napoleon could only attack, so to speak, the *neck* of the arrow, which was protected by a ditch and a weak wall, and flanked by towers; but Sidney Smith, having command of the sea, could sweep the four faces of the town with the fire of his guns, as well as command all the sea-roads in its vicinity.

He guessed, from the delay of the French in opening fire, that they were waiting for their siege-trains to arrive by sea. He kept vigilant watch, pounced on the French flotilla as it rounded the promontory of Mount Carmel, captured nine of the vessels, carried them with their guns and warlike material to Acre, and mounted his thirty-four captured pieces on the batteries of the town. Thus the disgusted French saw the very guns which were intended to batter down the defences of Acre—and which were glorious with the memories of a dozen victories in Italy—frowning at them, loaded with powder and shot, and manned by British sailors!

It is needless to say that a siege directed by Napoleon—the siege of what he looked upon as a contemptible and almost defenceless town, the single barrier betwixt his ambition and its goal—was urged with amazing fire and vehemence. The wall was battered day and night, a breach fifty feet wide made, and more than twelve assaults delivered with all the fire and daring of which French soldiers, gallantly led, are capable. So sustained was the fighting that on one occasion the combat raged in the ditch and on the breach for *twenty-five* successive hours. So close and fierce was it that one half-ruined tower was held by *both* besiegers and besieged for twelve hours in succession, and neither would yield.

At the breach, the two lines of desperately fighting men on repeated occasions clashed bayonets together, and wrestled and stabbed and died, till the survivors were parted by the barrier of the dead which grew beneath their feet.

Sidney Smith, however, fought like a sailor, and with all the cool ingenuity and resourcefulness of a sailor. His ships, drawn up on two faces of the town, smote the French stormers on either flank till they learned to build up a dreadful screen, made up partly of the dead bodies of their comrades.

Smith, too, perched guns in all sorts of unexpected positions—a 24-pounder in the lighthouse, under the command of an exultant middy; two 68-pounders under the charge of "Old Bray," the carpenter of the *Tigre*—and, as Sidney Smith himself reports, "one of the bravest and most intelligent men I ever served with"—and yet a third gun, a French brass 18-pounder, in one of the ravelins, under a master's mate.

Bray dropped his shells with the nicest accuracy in the centre of the French columns as they swept up the breach, and the middy, perched aloft, and the master's mate, from the ravelin, smote them on either flank with case shot, while the *Theseus* and the *Tigre* added to the tumult the thunder of their broadsides, and the captured French gunboats contributed the yelp of their lighter pieces.

The great feature of the siege, however, was the fierceness and the number of the sorties. Sidney Smith's sorties actually exceeded in number and vehemence Napoleon's assaults. He broke the strength of Napoleon's attacks by anticipating them. A crowd of Turkish irregulars, with a few naval officers leading them, and a solid mass of Jack Tars in the centre, would break from a sally port, or rush vehemently down through the gap in the wall, and scour the French trenches, overturn the gabions, spike the guns, and slay the guards.

The French reserves hurried fiercely up, always scourged, however, by the flank fire of the ships, and drove back the sortie. But the process was renewed the same night, or the next day, with unlessened fire and daring.

The French engineers, despairing of success on the surface, betook themselves to mining; whereupon the besieged made a desperate sortie and reached the mouth of the mine. Lieutenant Wright, who led them, and who had already received two shots in his sword-arm, leaped down the mine, followed by his sailors, slew the miners, destroyed their work, and safely regained the town.

The British sustained one startling disaster. Captain Miller, of the *Theseus*, whose ammunitions ran short, carefully collected such French shells as fell into the town without exploding, and duly returned them alight and supplied with better fuses to their original senders.

He had collected some seventy shells on the *Theseus*, and was preparing them for use against the French. The carpenter of the ship was endeavouring to get the fuse out of a loaded shell with an augur, and a middy undertook to assist him, in characteristic middy fashion, with a mallet and a spike-nail. A huge shell under his treatment suddenly exploded on the quarter-deck of the *Theseus*, and the other sixty-nine followed suit.

The two ingenious men disappeared into space, forty seamen, with Captain Miller himself, were killed, and forty-seven, including the two lieutenants of the ship, the chaplain, and the surgeon, were seriously wounded.

The whole of the poop was blown to pieces, and the ship was left a wreck, with fire breaking out at half-a-dozen points. The fire was subdued, and the *Theseus* survived in a half-gutted condition, but the disaster was a severe blow to Sir Sidney's resources.

As evening fell on May 7th, the white sails of a fleet became visible over the sea-rim, and all firing ceased, while besiegers and beseiged watched the approaching ships. Was it a French fleet or a Turkish? Did it

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bring succour to the besieged or a triumph to the besiegers?

The approaching ships flew the crescent! It was the Turkish fleet from Rhodes bringing reinforcements! But the wind was sinking, and Napoleon, who had watched the approach of the hostile ships with feelings which may be guessed, calculated that there remained six hours before they could cast anchor in the bay. Eleven assaults had been already made, in which eight French generals and the best officers in every branch of the service had perished. There remained time for a twelfth assault. He might yet pluck victory from the very edge of the defeat.

Lannes' grenadiers were tumbled headlong from the tower.

At ten o'clock that night the French artillery was brought up close to the counterscarp to batter down the curtain, and a new breach was made. Lannes led his division against the shot-wrecked tower, and General Rimbaud took his grenadiers with a resistless rush through the new breach.

All night the combat raged, the men fighting desperately hand to hand. When the rays of the level morning sun broke through the pall of smoke which hung sullenly over the combatants, the tricolour flew on the outer angle of the tower, and still the ships bringing reinforcements had not reached the harbour.

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Sidney Smith, at this crisis, landed every man from the English ships, and led them, pike in hand, to the breach, and the shouting and madness of the conflict awoke once more. To use Sidney Smith's own words "the muzzles of the muskets touched each other—the spear-heads were locked together."

But Sidney Smith's sailors, with the brave Turks who rallied to their help, were not to be denied.

Lannes' grenadiers were tumbled headlong from the tower, Lannes himself being wounded, while Rimbaud's brave men, who were actually past the breach, were swept into ruin, their general killed, and the French soldiers within the breach all captured or slain.

One of the dramatic incidents of the siege was the assault made by Kleber's troops. They had not taken part in the siege hitherto, but had won a brilliant victory over the Arabs at Mount Tabor. On reaching the camp, flushed with their triumph, and seeing how slight were the apparent defences of the town, they demanded clamorously to be led to the assault. Napoleon consented. Kleber, who was of gigantic stature, with a head of hair worthy of a German music-master or of a Soudan dervish, led his grenadiers to the edge of the breach, and stood there, while with gesture and voice—a voice even above the fierce and sustained crackle of the musketry—he urged his men on. Napoleon, standing on a gun in the nearest French battery, watched the sight with eager eyes—the French grenadiers running furiously up the breach, the grim line of levelled muskets that barred it, the sudden roar of the English guns, as from every side they smote the staggering French column

Vainly single officers struggled out of the torn mass, ran gesticulating up the breach, and died at the muzzles of the British muskets. The men could not follow, or only died as they leaped forward. The French grenadiers, still fighting, swearing, and screaming, were swept back past the point where Kleber stood, hoarse with shouting, black with gunpowder, furious with rage.

The last assault on Acre had failed! The French infantry, field artillery, and baggage silently defiled that night to the rear. The heavy guns were buried in the sand, and after sixty days of open trenches Napoleon, for the first time in his life, though not for the last, ordered a retreat!

Napoleon buried in the breaches of Acre not merely 3,000 of his bravest troops, but the golden dream of his life. "In that miserable fort," as he said, "lay the fate of the East." Napoleon expected to find in it the Pacha's treasures and arms for 300,000 men!

"When I have captured it," he said to Bourienne, "I shall march upon Damascus and Aleppo. I shall arm the tribes; I shall reach Constantinople; I shall overturn the Turkish Empire; I shall found in the East a new and grand empire. Perhaps I shall return to Paris by Adrianople and Vienna!"

Napoleon was cheerfully willing to pay the price of what religion he had to accomplish this dream. He was willing, that is, to turn Turk. Henry IV. said "Paris was worth a mass," "and was not the East," said Napoleon, "worth a turban and a pair of trousers?"

In his conversations at St. Helena with Las Cases he seriously defended this policy. His army, he added, would have shared his "conversion," and have taken their new creed with a Parisian laugh. "Had I but captured Acre," Napoleon added, "I would have reached Constantinople and the Indies; I would have changed the face of the world. But that man made me miss my destiny."

Las Cases dwells upon the curious correspondence which existed between Philippeaux, who engineered the defence of Acre, and Napoleon, who attacked it. They were, he says, "of the same nation, of the same age, of the same rank, of the same corps, and of the same school."

But if Philippeaux was, in a sense, the brains of the defence, Sidney Smith was the sword. There was, perhaps, it may be regretfully confessed, a streak of the charlatan in him. He shocked the judgment of more sober men. Wellington's stern, sober sense was affronted by him, and he described him as "a mere vaporiser." "Of all the men who I ever knew who have any reputation," Wellington told Croker, "the man who least deserved it is Sir Sidney Smith."

Wellington's temperament made it possible for him to understand Sidney Smith's erratic and dazzling genius. Napoleon's phrase is the best epitaph of the men who defended Acre. It is true Napoleon himself described Sidney Smith afterwards as "a young fool," who was "capable of invading France with 800 men." But such "young fools" are often the makers of history!

("*Great Sea Duels*" *next week.*)

RESULT OF

"STORY WITHOUT WORDS" COMPETITION.

No. 6.

The £2 prize has gone to F. H. Clarke, 36, Bamford Road, Didsbury, Manchester.

To each of the following five a bottle of *Home Notes Bouquet* has been forwarded:

Mrs. C. Purchase, 4, Havelock Terrace, Southampton.

W. L. Thompson, 6, Wendover Crescent, Mount Florida, Glasgow.

E. L. Dysart, Bowness, Windermere, Westmoreland.

W. Shipway, 32, Howard Street, Reading.

John Bell, care of Hudson, Matthews and Co., 32, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.

The following is the winner's attempt:

1.

"Ze lonch, Alphonse, vas *très joli*,
And now bring out ze *eau de vie*.

2.

"Ah! how it sparkles, nothing's wrong;
Now, as they say, ve shan't be long.

3.

"You need, my friend, ze bracing air;
You seem not *assez musculaire*.

4.

"*I* show you now: for mighty poulls
You have ze bit on your friend Jules."

5.

Alphonse his struggling friend assists,
The cork, however, still resists.

6.

Despairing, they the bottle dump,
And quench their thirst with *eau de pump*.

MORAL.

Reader! Should e'er such fate betide,
Knock off the neck (just nick the side),
Nor vanquished be like those poor fools
Brave Alphonse, et son ami Jules

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Short Stories

£50 IN 23 PRIZES. PICTURE PUZZLES. No. 2. First Series.

1st PRIZE	Twenty Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE	A Ten-Pound Note.
3rd PRIZE	A Five-Pound Note.
4th to 13th PRIZES	Ten Sovereigns.
14th to 23rd PRIZES	Ten Half-Sovereigns.

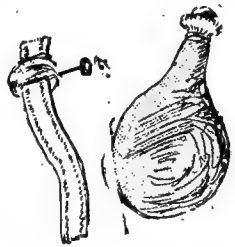
BELOW you will find ten pictures. Each represents the name of a gentleman who, on January 1st, 1897, was a Member of Parliament.

Write down their names in the spaces provided, and keep your list until three other sets have appeared. **DON'T SEND THEM IN UNTIL TUESDAY, APRIL 27, NEXT.** *Each set of five sheets must come to us in one envelope.*

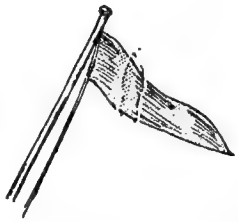
Don't be discouraged if you cannot solve them all. Others may be no more clever than yourself. Send in forty-five, or forty, or even fewer.

You may forward as many attempts as you like, but each set of four must be in a separate envelope, and will be considered separate attempts.

No. 11.....



No. 12.....



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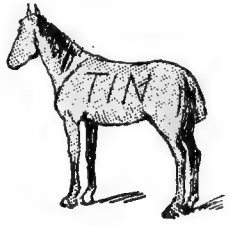

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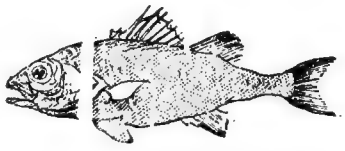

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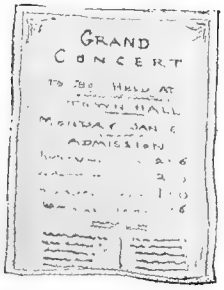
No. 18.....



No. 19.....

Remember these Things.

YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the surnames of the people, except in cases where the christian names are depicted.

Name.....

Address.....

No. 20.....

There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of M.P.'s.—Whitaker's Almanack, the London Post-Office Directory, Hazell's Annual, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

An Episode of Life

By the Author of "Dunsford," etc.

CHAPTER V.

On the Brink.

The next morning, and a dull, dreary, wet morning it was, Jack Sinclair, in the smoking-room at White's, was making pretence of reading the news. He found the paper more than usually dull and uninteresting. The world was out of gear for him. He knew Roy's obstinacy of old. Easy going, not readily moved in general, willing to let others decide for him as Roy was, he recognised that this time he was in earnest. Roy's parting words on the pavement last night ran through his mind and blurred perception of the print before him.

It was with no surprise that he heard quick, impatient steps behind him, and felt a firm, familiar grip upon his arm.

"Jack, old friend, I was a cad last night! I've come to apologise to you. We have been chums too long to quarrel. Forgive me, Jack!"

He wrote rapidly.

And Jack noticed that Roy looked tired and worn. His face was drawn, and though he laughed as if he expected a ready response, he was not at ease.

"Of course, Roy, let us say no more about it."

"Thanks! Come and sit over here. Join me in a brandy and soda—my head aches. Look here, Jack, this cannot go on! I must find Nelly, if only to say good-bye. I tell you my blood tingles at the thought that she is so near and I cannot see her. It is useless to talk to me of prudence, of duty, and so on. You are right, in a way, to try to keep us apart. I am reckless. You said I was mad. I am. But if I can tell her face to face that I am not the brute she must have thought me, if I can make my peace, I will be prudent. I will remember my wife. Do not drive me to desperation. In trying to find her I shall do more harm, compromise myself more, than by an interview of which no one would know. Put an end to this, tell me her address. Hang it, man, cannot you see how I feel?"

"Yes, I can, and it is just because I fear the consequences that I will not. Think of Mary; you are married."

"No need to remind me of that," sneered Roy, "her voice reminds me of that fact every time she speaks, and that is not seldom. I will only see her once, Jack. If she says 'Go,' go I will. Only once, I promise you."

This was exactly what Sinclair feared she would not do. He remembered Nelly's interest in Roy on the boat, and was certain that she would not be able to say "Go."

"I am stronger than you think," Roy proceeded rapidly, "if I make you a promise I will keep it. I must see her, but only to explain. That curt announcement in the *Morning Post* was so infernally cruel. I explained, in a way, by letter, but I never could write letters, and she must think me a brute, and everything low. If I could see her and get forgiveness I should be content."

"Roy, I cannot. She is out of your life; she leaves town to-day and will travel abroad"—he invented the lie. "Much better so. Write to her, and I will forward the letter."

"No, no; you take me to her. Be present all the time if you like."

"Nonsense! Don't mix me up in this; I will have no part in the comedy—or tragedy, for tragedy it will be. For Mary's sake, Roy, think! It will not be one interview. If it would end there—— But do not be a child."

"It shall be one meeting only, I swear! If she says 'Go,' I have already said it is finished."

"But," Sinclair interrupted, "if she does not say 'Go'?"

A light flashed in Roy's eyes. It was an incautious question in that it showed that Jack feared her purpose.

Roy answered quickly: "There can be no doubt about that; her love for me must be dead. I only want to clear myself."

The tone of his voice belied the words, and Sinclair, who was near to surrender, hardened.

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"No, it is impossible," he said.

Roy Arbuthnot rose from the chair. He frowned angrily as he said coldly: "We have been friends for many years; I thought you would have helped me now. I will find her without you, and when I do, blame yourself for what may happen. I meant what I said. I would have seen Nelly once only; now I will go my own way. I will not quarrel with you, nor repeat the folly of last night, but you will not understand. It is useless to say more."

He turned and left the room.

Sinclair uneasily watched him as he went. Had he in attempting to do good done harm? Could he prevent this meeting? He would try. He would write to Nelly to warn her, to ask her, for the sake of all, to leave town for the present, and as quickly as possible.

He wrote rapidly, describing Roy's excitement, his evident love for her, of late dormant, but now awakened into full flame, and conjured her to keep out of his way. He pointed out the trouble which must ensue if they should meet. Perhaps, not an altogether wise letter, but, at any rate, written with good motives. He rang the bell, and then, not waiting for an answer to his summons, impatiently strode into the hall and gave the letter to the porter, telling him to call a District Messenger, and instruct him to deliver the letter at once.

As Sinclair passed through the doors into the street, Arbuthnot crossed the hall in time to hear the last words of the message he had given the porter.

He guessed at once that it was a letter to Nelly, probably to warn her, and to ask her to go away.

He must see the address. He told the porter to call a cab and to put up the large umbrella which was kept by him for the purpose. The rain beat down in fierce gusts, the porter, to enable him better to manage the unwieldy umbrella, placed the letter upon a small table which stood within the portico. Arbuthnot read the address on the envelope and sprang into the hansom, ignoring in his haste the shelter of the umbrella, which the porter held with difficulty. Leaning back as the window was lowered, he gave the cabman the address. He had triumphed so far, and more easily than he had expected.

On the way he wondered whether she still was known as Mrs. Denison. He had paid more attention to the address than the name. The impression was there that he had seen on the envelope: "Mrs. Denison, Hotel Dieu Donnée." Yes, he felt sure of it.

"Is a Mrs. Denison staying here?" he asked the porter. "Send up to ask if she will see me—Mr. Sinclair."

"Yes, sir," as the man departed on his errand.

Presently he was requested to follow a waiter, and mounted to the first floor.

As the door opened she came forward with both hands extended. "Jack! This is—Roy!" then mastering her surprise as the waiter lingered, she said with heightened colour and acted ease: "How do you do?"

Roy turned to the man, saying shortly: "You may go."

The waiter chuckled as he closed the door: "It ain't Jack, anyway."

"Roy, what does this mean? I ought to call you Mr. Arbuthnot, but I can't. Roy, is it kind?"

"Nelly, my darling—nay, do not look like that. I love you—I am wretched! I come to beg your forgiveness. Sinclair told me last night he had seen you, but would not give me your address. However, I found it out, I wanted you to know that I was not responsible for the cruelty of the past. To tell you how I had been forced into this thing. I asked Jack to let you know that. I could not write, I hadn't the pluck. I felt such a fool."

"He told me."

"I was driven, Nelly. I had no option. I have tried to live it down, tried to be cynical, to think, to persuade myself you would not care."

"Roy!"

"Yes, I know. I wanted to be a brute, to stifle thought, remembrance. You were away, I hoped—no, I didn't. I thought—I don't mean that, I tried to forget you, anyway. But I could not. Your image was always before me, your voice always in my ears. When I heard you were in London, all other ideas, all prudence went like the wind. I must see you, and here I am, Nelly. Will you forgive? I cannot live without you."

Holding out her hands in protestation.

He tried to take her in his arms, but she shrank from him, holding out her hands in protestation.

He covered them with kisses, called her his love, his darling, vowing the world held for him but one woman. He begged her pity, if not her love. She had loved him once, could she not forgive?

"Roy! how hard you make it for me. Do you imagine I have no heart? I loved you, I shall never love another. You broke my heart. I schooled myself to be callous, and when I thought the lesson was learned—you come."

"What can I say? I loved you—I love you! Oh, yes, I know what you would say. If you could understand how I am punished, you would pity. Nelly, I appeal to you, forgive me!"

She sank into a chair and covered her face with her hands. Short, dry sobs shook her. It was a great temptation. She had told Sinclair she would set aside all ideas of a reconciliation, and here was a trial forced upon her on the morrow of her promise—a trial for which she was not prepared. Roy, standing by her side, passed his arm round her shoulders and drew her to him. She could not resist, and he kissed her. She started guiltily.

"No, Roy, not that. Give me time; let me think. Go now, please."

"May I come again?"

"No; better not. Let this be good-bye. It is too trying; it hurts us both. For my sake, Roy, go!"

"If I may come again. Only once, Nelly; I cannot go like this."

"Better not, Roy; much better not. I am wretched, spiritless, and, oh! so lonely. I cannot think; my head whirls. Leave me, leave me!" she pleaded piteously.

"This afternoon?" he whispered, as again he drew her to him. "This afternoon?" he repeated, as she remained silent, breathing quickly, and looking straight before her, where the meaningless pattern on the wall bewildered her with its confusion.

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She had no strength of will to longer refuse. It had come so suddenly. If there had been warning, time to reflect, to consider, she would have steeled her heart, controlled herself, but as it was, although she murmured "No, no," he turned to leave, well content.

The door opened in his face and, there stood Mary. As he stopped dismayed, she looked him up and down with anger and jealousy contending. Her eyes blazed as she turned sharply to where Nelly stood, surprised at the intrusion. The two women faced each other, ready for war. Instinctively Nelly knew who this was, knew she was face to face with Roy's wife. But she was with her back to the wall; hers was not the nature to cringe and give way. All

The two women faced each other.

her combative instinct was aroused. She looked straight into Mary's eyes unflinchingly as the latter sneeringly said:

"So this is Nelly! I overheard you last night and followed you here, Roy. I never thought I need spy upon you, but this must be settled here on the spot. Who is this woman? What is she to you? You must choose between her and me."

Roy, not without difficulty, rose to the occasion. "This lady was a—friend—of mine before our marriage, I came here merely to wish her good-bye, she is going abroad."

"Choose, choose between us," answered Mary bitterly, "now, before it is too late."

Of course he answered that he would go with her. He had, he repeated, only come to the hotel to say good-bye.

"Then come with me," Mary answered drily as she swept to the door. And he went. Nelly had said no word. But a few minutes had elapsed between Mary's entrance and exit, and there had been no need.

The door had but just closed behind them when the waiter entered bearing a letter. It was that which Sinclair had dispatched from the club. Nelly took it mechanically. Her thoughts were far away. Where could this lead to? She had been weak when firm resolve would have saved them. She blamed herself for yielding. His handsome presence, the well-loved voice, pathetic in remorse, had carried her away. And for what? Pain and regret, nothing more. She had excused his conduct months ago, she had forgiven, and now she loved again. And how he loved her. It was pleasing to know that. Every word, every gesture, had betrayed his love; it was not necessary, but he had avowed it; she knew it was true.

And all in vain. One more meeting and they must part for all time. Roy would come to her again. She felt that he would come at all hazard now Mary had asserted herself, but it must be for the last time. Fate dealt hardly with her. Could she bid him go? Yes, she must pr[illegible]see. She would keep her word, but how hard it was. With a shrug of impatience she opened Sinclair's letter, turning first to the signature, then, seeing from whom it came, she rapidly read the hurried lines.

It angered her, she dared not ask herself why. His advice was so evidently good, his warnings so clearly necessary, and, since Roy's wife had been there, more so than before. She felt she ought to do as he suggested, he was absolutely right. But! Ah! that *but! There* was sense, and just then she hated sense.

Inclination, love, pointed one way, and he said take the other, and she saw he feared her resolve, her power of will, and that was vexing, because, again, he had reason for doubt. How tiresome that he should advise as she did not wish. She could not hide from herself that she did wish differently. It was useless to attempt that. Blind animal instinct drew her one way; reason, cultivated reason, to the exactly opposite direction.

As she still sat twisting Sinclair's note in nervous hands, mentally discussing the problem, the door again opened and Sinclair entered.

Nelly met him half way. "I wanted to see you," she said eagerly.

"Jack, this time," the waiter muttered as he closed the door.

"I sent you a few lines, have you got them Nelly? Yes! Then I thought it best to come in person. I met Roy this morning as I told you, he swears he will find you."

"He has just left."

"Here? How did he find you out?"

"He didn't. He found me in."

"Oh! don't be flippant. This is serious."

"Yes, I know it is. Forgive my feeble joke, I am nervous, hysterical, and don't know whether to laugh or cry. Roy came before your note, and his wife followed. Yes, you may well start. She overheard something last night, and suspected. He wants me to see him again, too, Jack! what am I to do? She and he have just left, but he will come again, I know. It would be foolish to try to deceive you. I love him, he loves me. You say we must not meet again. I feel, I know you are right, but, oh! it is maddening."

"You know what I would say, Nelly, be brave. Cold, cold, you may call it, but refuse. You ruin him if you yield. His wife is not the woman to submit to slight. It is worse now that she knows. It is ruin, Nelly, to her, as well as to him; you do not wish that, I am sure. You see, I put you aside."

"Quite," she interrupted bitterly.

"I only do so to appeal to your generosity. I know you like Roy."

"Like!" she again broke in. "It is torture to me to hear you speak so coldly. Of course, you are worldly wise in treating me as of no account. I suppose—yes, I know—to the world I am beneath consideration. But I have feelings, even I, and so nothing of a heart. You ignore,

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that. I am to suffer. You accept that as a foregone conclusion. I was brushed aside before. Do you think it does not hurt?"

"The pain will be more intense when the crash comes in the end, as come it will: It must be, Nelly. Face it now—it is a wrench, but get it over. Pack up your luggage and go. I can say no more."

"You mean well, Jack," she said more gently. "I thank you for unpalatable, but good advice. I must think. Good-bye!"

He felt he had not succeeded, but could say no more.

When he had gone, Nelly sat down to think.

The position seemed hopeless. Memory rushed back to their separation. How then she had tried to detain him by her side and failed. The scene in the tiny dining-room at the villa was a picture vividly impressed upon her brain. How she had believed the victory won. His reckless action in throwing the roses into the grate. She could hear the crash of the breaking glass now. His loving words, his delight at the prospect of a flight to the other side of the world. The whole scene stood out in sharp contrast to what followed. That was the pleasant side of the picture, that was the dream. How painful the awakening! She tried to put it aside, to think. What was to be her decision? It must be made to-day.

Roy's future rested with her; she had only to say "Come," and he would be ruined. The word startled her—it came unbidden. Ruin! Ruin! It seemed to blaze in fire before her eyes. She had merely toyed with the question so far, had allowed full play to memory, that pleasant memory of the villa; but now reason, cold, hard, cruel reason, said but one word—ruin. If to stay with her before meant ruin to Roy, doubly so would it be now. She tried hard to escape that truth—to say to herself that no one would know.

What was to be her decision?

Impetuously she sprang to her feet, and, pressing her hands upon her aching brows, exclaimed: "It must not be! I love him so, I cannot! Oh, God, if God there be, give me strength! Let me stifle feelings, love, everything. In mercy make me hard, cold, calculating. Yes, that is it—I must be calculating," she laughed bitterly; "calculating, *I!*" and left the sentence unfinished.

"I will plead to him for my sake," she mused. "Yes, that must be my line. Tell him it can only end in unhappiness for me—appeal to his generosity. How foolish of me to talk so! He was forced into a parting before, and would be again. Oh, what am I to say? Jack is right, of course; but it is hard. Ah, well, it is finished, and I must remain a waif and stray. My head aches; I must lie down, or when Roy comes he will think I have grown old and ugly."

As the short November day drew to its close, Nelly dressed with more than usual care, and waited nervously Roy's return. She was to be cold, unbending, but could not resist the pleasure of being pleasing to his eyes. He should see her at her best. It was to be for the last time. Standing before the mirror with brilliant electric lights on either side and above, she surveyed herself critically, and, after a pause, complacently. She was beautiful, and knew it. They were never to meet again; for the last time let him see her to advantage.

And as Roy entered, he exclaimed involuntarily: "How lovely you look, Nelly. More beautiful than ever. I am not really to lose you, am I? Don't break my heart, Nelly."

"It must be, Roy. For your sake, for mine, we must not meet."

"Nelly, I implore you. In thought I am with you always. Cannot you have some pity?"

"Roy! how you tempt me! but you should not. Your duty to your wife, your family."

"Yes, yes, I know. I will consider all that, I will take every care. No one shall know that I see you. Nelly, if you send me away now I shall do something foolish. I am desperate, childish, anything you like to call me. My dear, I swear I love you, but you know that. You are the only woman the world holds; if I lose you again I care for nothing. Nelly, dearest, do not be cruel," and he took her in his arms, crushing her to him as he kissed her passionately.

Now she no longer resisted. Her resolve to be firm and cold was swept away by his impetuous pleading. It had been at best but a make-belief, and shivered into atoms before his passion.

She had said she would appeal for her sake to his manhood—his consideration. Now the thought never crossed her mind. Reason had decreed that this would ruin him, now reason was thrust into the background.

Happy in the moment, returning love for love, the future, like the past, forgotten, the die was cast, prudence was ignored.

(To be concluded.)

Result of Watch Competition.

No. 3.

The correct time was 6hr. 33min. 20sec., and the winner's time was 6hr. 33min. 30sec. The winner is Mr. Oliver Howil, 10, Station Road, Newsham Blyth, Northumberland.

THE GREEN MOROCCO PURSE.

A DARK-HAIRED girl in a white jersey, with a red ribbon round her neck, sat at the window of a small cottage situated in the village of Twyford. The street on which the cottage faced was narrow and dark, and the room in which the girl sat was clean, but poorly furnished.

She was very sweet and pretty, and looked as much out of place in her dingy, mean surroundings as a moss rose in a London garden. Her brown eyes were clouded, and she spoke in a weary tone to a patient-looking old lady, who sat in an armchair by the fire—for there was a small fire, although it was a hot afternoon in September.

"It's no use, mother," said Nita with a sigh. "We have not got the money, and we are not likely to get it either."

"I wonder, my dear, if you were to go to Reading with a letter to old Mr. Davis, perhaps he would give me the money."

"I don't believe it, and I don't want to go to Reading, and I hate old Davis!" cried the girl petulantly. "I'll go on the river instead; Mr. Barnes will lend me a boat."

She rose and began looking behind the coal-scuttle for her hat. It was the place she usually threw it when she came in. Mrs. Hastings sighed heavily. The sum wanted was only £20, but to these two lone women it was as unobtainable as two millions.

It was owed for rent long overdue, and Nita had been to the landlord with tears in her pretty brown eyes, and begged for time, but now they were unavailing, and the money had to be found within fourteen days.

"*Dear* Mr. Barnes, let me go for a row," she said some few minutes later, sidling up to the boat owner.

He had a great weakness for pretty Miss Hastings, and his wife declared he would give her his pony and traps and all his business if she but asked for it.

"Let me have the *Elfie*—may I?" she continued, indicating a lovely little boat fresh from the painter's hands.

"Not that one, missy," replied Mr. Barnes. "She 'ave just come from Lonnon this day mornin', she 'ave—you take *'er*, missy—she's good, she is," and he helped her into another boat of somewhat less charming exterior.

If she looked pretty on shore, the girl in the white jersey looked ten times more so on the water. But it was not of her appearance she was thinking. The fact of their wanting £20, and there being only 1s. 6d. for the next day's dinner, occupied her mind much more; and the sun was declining when she turned the boat homeward, still undecided as to whether it should be stewed steak or "a little fish to make up."

Suddenly coming towards her round the bend of the river, she saw another boat with a single occupant—and that occupant a man. As it came closer she recognised the boat as the *Elfie*, with her freshly-varnished sides bravely glittering in the sunlight.

"Pah!" said Nita in disgust. "Some horrid tourist down for a couple of hours, who can afford 9d. an hour." But when he came closer she altered her opinion. The man in the boat was Theodore Clements, whose father, the rich diamond merchant, had taken the Grange for the season.

As the boats passed, Mr. Clements bestowed a stare of hearty admiration on the girl in the white jersey, and she looked down and blushed, and hated herself for so doing.

Some hours later he passed her again. It was in the narrow village street, while she was out thoughtfully expending her 1s. 6d. She had dropped her handkerchief, and he ran after her and gave it back, and raised his hat and asked if he might help her carry her parcels home as they lived almost next door, but she curtly thanked him, and hurried home, uncertain as to whether he had not first taken her handkerchief from her pocket and then given it to her!

The next day Mrs. Hastings was firm. Nita must go to Reading with a letter to Mr. Davis. She put it off as late as she could, and finally departed, very much out of temper.

"It *is* a shame," she grumbled, "wasting a beautiful day like this hunting about for a horrid old man, and I know that I am no more likely to get the money from him than I am of seeing it opposite to me in this carriage."

Just at that moment she caught sight of a glitter between the opposite seat and the stuffed back of the carriage. She was alone in the compartment, so bending forward, she put out her hand to feel what it was.

The next moment she had drawn out a heavy green morocco purse!

For quite a minute she stared in stupefaction at the sight, and then with a beating heart she undid the clasp.

There lay before her £25 in gold and a lot of loose silver. If the skies had fallen, Nita would not have been more astonished. She rubbed her eyes and stared at the money, and then rubbed her eyes again. For fully three minutes she sat thus holding the money in her hands, and then came the queston: "What to do with it?"

Should she give it to the guard when the train stopped and have it taken to the lost property office, and perhaps never be claimed? or, perchance, had Heaven sent it to pay the rent; therefore, should she keep it? Nobody being present to answer her self-put questions, she arrived in Reading station, and straightway she put the money in her pocket and walked swiftly away, resolved at present to keep it and see what happened. Mr. Davis was out, and was not expected back; so, heavy hearted and with a guilty sensation of theft upon her, Nita journeyed home, expecting every moment someone to put his hand on her shoulder, and ask her where she got the money from. She *knew* she ought to give the purse up, but she was very poor, and she yielded to temptation, as so many have done. The next few days were those of the keenest agony to the poor girl. Every step that

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passed the house she expected to belong to the constable, and every knock at the door sounded like a summons from Reading Police Court.

She stayed indoors as much as she could, for she was afraid to meet the eyes of the townspeople, and was also afraid of hearing something about the purse, for common-sense told her nobody would be likely to lose a large sum like that and make no inquiries.

At last, a week later, came a curt and cold refusal from Mr. Davis, together with a peremptory notice from the landlord to pay the rent the next day. Mrs. Hastings alternately wept and prayed for the money, and at last Nita set her little teeth, and said to herself: "Very well, I *will* take the money; I am a thief, I suppose, but I shall not be alone in the world. I'll take him that money to-night, and then—and then! What?"

Her thoughts took her no further, how she was to account for the sudden accession to wealth she could not fathom, so, woman-like, she left it alone, hoping for Luck to help her out when the time should come.

Having decided upon her course of action, she felt easier, and sallied forth to buy some small household requisites, humming to herself.

Having made a tour of the village and made her purchases, she went home again.

The little house was silent. Poor Mrs. Hastings had gone out, to see if a friend would help her to find the money. Nita put away her parcels and sat down, and having nothing better to do, idly read the stale country news out of the paper that the candles had been wrapped in.

All at once a small paragraph caught her eyes, and the print danced madly before her! She held on to the table for support, and after a moment managed to read the following:

"Yesterday, Mrs. Maria Higgins charged a young man of gentlemanly appearance with the theft of her purse. Her case was, that she and the accused were the sole occupants of the carriage from H—— to Reading. The purse, which contained the sum of £25 in gold besides some silver, was in her hand as she entered the carriage, because she took her ticket from it.

"On the arrival of the train at Reading she found the door too stiff to open, and asked the accused if he would open it. This he did, and also helped her to alight, and it was then that she found her purse was gone. The accused is a gentleman of high social standing in the county, and the case is exciting a good deal of interest, as although he stoutly denies the theft it is understood he has been losing a good deal lately over horse racing. He stands remanded until next Tuesday."

Next Tuesday? Nita raised her eyes to the ceiling and counted the days over. Heavens, "next Tuesday" was to-day; and perhaps even then, while she sat there, some innocent man was being tried for the theft of the purse that *she*—Nita Hastings—had got in her possession!

Like one possessed she dashed upstairs, and, throwing on her hat and jacket, fled down the street to the railway station, the green morocco purse tight in her hand. The Reading train (there were but three a day) was just starting as she ran over the bridge and called loudly to the guard to wait for her.

He opened a smoking third, threw her in, and the train started. Nita sank exhausted upon a seat, and gazed helplessly at the purse. "Poor man! perhaps he has been convicted and sent to prison, and if he is married, the disgrace may kill his wife! Merciful Heaven! I shall then be a murderess as well as a thief!"

Poor Nita, this last thought nearly distracted her. The train had scarcely time to draw up ere she sprang from the carriage, and was away across the station and down the street towards the Court-house. A large number of idlers were outside.

Clasping the purse tightly against her beating heart, Nita wedged her small figure through the people into the crowded court room.

A loud humming sounded in her ears and she but indistinctly heard someone speak ng: "Now it only remains to decide if the prisoner is the thief——"

"He is not—he is not!" cried Nita, stepping forward and holding the purse high in the air, at sight of which an old woman in green glasses and a blue bonnet shrieked out: "My purse! My purse! Oh, the hussy!"

What a scene there was, and what a noise!

It was not until they threatened to clear the court that Nita's story could be heard.

The poor girl, so excited and so nervous, could hardly speak, and when the magistrate asked her why she had not given the purse up before, she could not answer at first, but on being pressed, she raised her pretty little head proudly, and said:

"Because I am poor, and my mother is poor, and we wanted the money. I did not steal it, I found it, and was tempted to keep it. I only knew an hour ago that an innocent man" (she waved her hand vaguely towards the dock where she saw a man standing) "was accused of taking the money, so—so I have brought it back, although to-morrow my mother and I will be turned into the street without a home, for want of it!" and she burst into tears.

Then someone took her out of the court and into the open air. She sat down on a seat to recover, and curious knots of people gathered round to look at her, especially two rough-looking men, who said they would like to see what a woman was like who would bring £25 back to oblige an unknown person! It was wasting the gifts of providence, according to them!

Then someone gave her his arm and assisted her into a beautiful carriage, wherein was an old gentleman. At sight of her he seized her hand and shook it fervently before everybody and said: "God bless you, my child, you have saved my life and the honour of my family, for had my son been convicted the disgrace would have killed me!"

Nita, still dazed, looked at the old gentleman, and wondered when she had seen him before?

A young man jumped into the carriage, and, raising his hat to the people who gave a cheer at sight of him, the carriage started.

Nita turned round. The young man was Theodore Clements!

"*You* here?" she said involuntarily.

"Rather!" he said with a laugh. "If it hadn't been for you, there's no knowing where I should have been."

"Why?" she said, looking mystified. "I don't understand; were you in there?" indicating the Court-house.

"Was I *there?* Don't you know it was I who was accused of stealing that purse?"

* * * * *

And the villagers even now say that the wedding between Mr. Clements' only son and Miss Nita Hastings was the prettiest that has ever been seen.

Erroll Stanhope.

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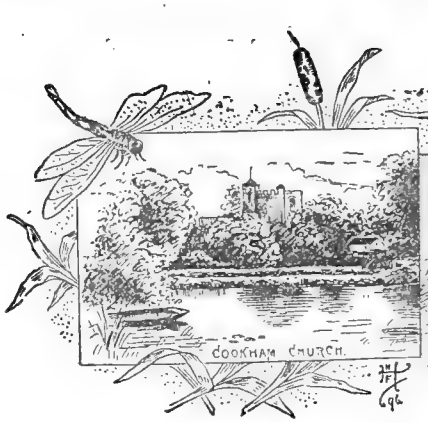

THE BLACK SHAITAN.

Calmly and swiftly the huge *Empress of India* clove her way through the glassy Red Sea. The sun beat down with a relentless intensity, defying every attempt to keep the decks cool, even by the aid of elaborate awnings.

The air literally quivered as though on the verge of combustion; the ship's sides were burning hot, for the fierce rays, pouring down from the pitilessly blue sky, were reflected back by the still surface of the salt sea. Passengers were prostrate in their cabins, seeking shelter, and longing for rain, wind, or sudden death.

Invalids from the scorched-up plains of India, young mothers with their little children, all homeward bound, lay smitten by the fiery darts, gasping for air, wondering whether it would not have been better to have succumbed to fever before they had embarked.

Only one individual seemed utterly indifferent to the heat, though perhaps Captain Jack Clanton, as he reclined in a hammock-chair on deck right through the frightful day, dreamily gazing ahead, was the most affected by it.

He sat thus for hours, until the sun had dipped low on the horizon, inducing some of the more energetic passengers to venture a move from their cabins. Clanton brightened when he heard a joyous childish voice in the saloon, and when he saw the slender, white-clad form of a small maiden emerge on deck, he clapped his hands and called out to her quite gaily.

She was a delicate little thing, with a pale face and rather sunken blue eyes, and a wealth of golden hair. She ran to her friend, and seating herself at his feet, began a merry conversation, plentifully dotted with exclamations and endless questions.

Presently, groups of men and ladies came and installed themselves in lounging chairs under the awning, awaiting their afternoon tea. Three ladies passed Captain Clanton.

The little girl rushed up to one of them, calling out "Mamma." The mother bent down to kiss the uplifted bright face, and then said a few kind words to the Captain, who, however, answered but gruffly.

"What a bear that man is, Mrs. Mordant," said one of the ladies, as they passed on. "You ought not to let little Muriel be so much with him; she is sure to pick up such dreadful manners."

"I think he must be a little mad," added the third lady. "My husband told me many funny stories of his eccentricities."

"Well, it is a very sad story. We have known Captain Clanton for years; in fact, my husband knew him as quite a lad."

"Wasn't there some romantic story about a flirtation, and a girl in the hills who jilted him?"

"No, no; you must not talk like that! It is quite true that he was engaged to his cousin; you know General Cavendish's charming daughter, whom all the men raved about. The girl was much younger than Captain Clanton, who had seen her grow up under his uncle's roof. But she died, and the poor fellow felt the shock terribly. He says Muriel is just as Mary Cavendish was. That is why the child can manage him so well, I suppose."

"Yes, dear; but surely there was some tale going about Miss Cavendish having treated him badly?"

"The poor girl died of cholera."

The answer was slightly inconsequential, but Mrs. Mordant looked as though she wished to change the conversation. Her friends equally plainly showed that they were very far from being satisfied, so presently she spoke again:

"You see, poor Jack was always terribly jealous, and he believes his jealousy killed the girl he loved. Mary was a very lovely girl, who attracted attention wherever she went; and though she was thoroughly loyal to Captain Clanton, yet she could not help showing how much she appreciated admiration. As a rule, Jack's fits of jealousy were soon over, for Mary was really indifferent to all her admirers save her cousin. But last year an Imperial Russian prince came touring through India, and spent some time with General Cavendish. Among the Prince's staff was a very handsome, dark-visaged Khan from Asia, who held a post in the Russian army, and was made much of by his master. The Khan was a young man, partly civilised, having acquired a little of the veneer of Petersburg society. He quickly evinced a deep infatuation for Mary, who, on her part, merely treated him as one of her father's special guests.

"The first real quarrel between the two lovers was about this Khan. Jack hated his handsome face, his graceful horsemanship, and his Russian veneer of sneering, insincere politeness. He resented his admiration for Mary, and let her see it. Mary was greatly offended. She looked upon the Khan as a mere 'black man'—a being inferior to herself and friends—and felt Jack's jealousy as an insult. That Jack should be jealous of his fellow-officers, or even a simple civilian, was pardonable, but to be jealous of a 'black man' was

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quite different. At the same time he was her father's guest, and so she owed him some attention. Perhaps Jack's behaviour made her unconsciously more gracious to the Khan, and an estrangement grew up between the young people.

"It had been arranged that the General should take the Prince and his retinue on a hunting expedition, and that Mary was to remain behind with the Colonel's wife. But the quarrel with Jack made her alter her mind. She determined that she would go with her father, inducing several of the officers' wives to join the expedition. This only enraged Jack, and the more he showed his anger, the more determinedly did she overcome her father's objections and insist on carrying out her new plans.

"The party started for the hills, and soon after news reached us that there was illness among the General's party. We next heard that it was cholera, that several people had died of it, and that the Prince had bolted with his staff. Jack at once obtained leave and rode off to the hills. But he arrived too late. Mary had been seized with the dreadful malady and been carried off in a few hours. When Jack arrived the funeral was over.

"Whether it was the terrible shock or the long ride under the burning sun, Jack fell down in a kind of fit, and for days he was raving in bed. He kept calling Mary, talking of her as though she were still a little child. Then he would heap curses on the head of the 'Black Shaitan,' as he called the Khan. When Jack got better he volunteered for active service in one of our little frontier campaigns.

"But Captain Clanton has never been the same man since his illness. At times he has acted very strangely. He used to be kind to the natives, but he suddenly grew quite cruel and vindictive. Then he drank heavily, and at last had to get invalided home. We all hope that the change will set him up again. Certainly Muriel seems to have a good influence over him."

"But, my dear Mrs. Mordant, he is mad! I certainly should be afraid to leave a child of mine with such a man. Why the doctor told me that the other day Captain Clanton knocked down the ship's barber, poor inoffensive fellow, who was doing nothing, and called him a black devil, and all kinds of dreadful names."

"Yes, I told you he has contracted an unreasoning hatred for the natives."

Then the three friends chatted eagerly about Anglo-Indian ways, and the odd notions of certain generals and commissioners and their wives, until it was time for dinner, when they trooped back into the saloon.

Meanwhile, Captain Jack and little Muriel remained on deck. The Captain did not care for dinner, so he called for brandy and soda. By the doctor's orders Captain Clanton was only served by the stewards with a very little whisky in a great deal of mineral water, but on this night one of the under stewards either forgot his instructions, or wishing to avoid dancing attendance on the Captain, brought him a decanter of strong brandy and placed it on a table by his side.

Jack tasted the fiery liquor, and his craving for alcohol came back to him. He poured out the brandy, diluted it but slightly, and drank it off in great glassfuls. His companion's artless prattle seemed to move him deeply.

Poor Captain Jack had all his wits about him then; the misery of his loss, the dread of the long, dreary future, appalled him. How hard fate had been! His was to have been a life of endless joy with the girl he loved so well, and then his own accursed temper had wrecked everything. The past was full of woe, the future full of terrors.

Men called him mad. Well, yes, undoubtedly he was mad; that dull pain in the head, his cruel hate of every being who seemed capable of joy, his long hours of darkness, when there was no thought left, only a swift-recurring change of blood red with pitch-black before his eyes—that was madness, or the beginning of it.

And Jack's trembling hand poured out yet another glass and he drained it. Poor little Muriel, he thought; was her end to be the same as Mary's? Was a cruel fate, a "Black Shaitan," to cross her path, too? Thoughts crowded on his brain which nerved him to fresh visits to the brandy bottle, and to forget the presence of Muriel. His sufferings were far too intense for outward incidents to arrest his attention.

Neglected Muriel stole quietly away from her moody friend, and presently she encountered one of the Indian servants, the ship's barber, who was arranging chairs and cushions close beside the companion ladder; the little lady began to chat with him. The gentle Hindoo was only too delighted to grin and talk with this beautiful daughter of a great Mem Sahib.

Captain Jack had finished his brandy, his misery had fled, but his brain was on fire. Muriel had vanished, and he went in search of her. Presently he saw her little white figure and walked unsteadily towards her.

As he did so, the barber, perhaps with sore recollections of former *rencontres*, got up from his haunches and moved stealthily away. With a yell of "Black Shaitan!" Captain Jack darted forward, caught Muriel in his left arm, and with his right, jerking out from the shoulder, caught the black barber under the jaw, sending him headlong down the companion ladder. There was a vast hubbub all at once.

The Captain was surrounded by his friends and forcibly taken below to his cabin. He was raving in the paroxysms of *delirium tremens*. The doctor came, shook his head, and declared that all would be over before morning—the Captain's hours were numbered. He could do nothing there, but his services were urgently needed elsewhere, and so he went.

As the night advanced, Jack became calmer, and some of his friends went off, leaving two of the youngest subs to watch him. Then Jack regained his senses a bit, and kept moaning for a drop of brandy. His comrades tried to soothe him, but the moan: "Brandy! brandy!" went on without remission.

"Fetch the doctor, do, old chap," said one of the watchers; "I know plenty of 'Pills' say that a fellow who is bad ought to have a drop to keep him up."

Jack kept up his moan: "Brandy! brandy!"

"Poor devil, he's only an hour or two to live; seems beastly hard to torture him like this."

One of the young fellows went out in search of the doctor, but that worthy could not come, and merely said that no alcohol was to be given.

"Brandy! brandy! brandy!" came from the parched lips of their fever-tossed comrade.

"Go to the steward."

But the steward had grown alarmed at his previous indiscretion, and he refused. The moaning was piteous, and at last one of the subs went out on a raiding expedition. Everyone refused him the spirits he asked for, and he could find none in the cabins. As he was passing by one of the state-rooms Mrs. Mordant came out, and she asked after her poor friend. While he was answering her the young fellow caught sight of a bottle of eau-de-Cologne. He begged her to let him have it.

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"I've tried to get a drop of liquor for the poor chap everywhere, and can't. Let me have that. It'll be a mercy to the poor beggar, and can't do him any harm, for the doctor said he couldn't last till morning."

After much persuasion Mrs. Mordant gave the bottle, which was carried off triumphantly. They gave the patient a few drops in a glass of water. It seemed to refresh the dying man. He lay back with a gasp as though he were going to sleep. One of the watchers said he would take a turn on deck, seeing that all was quiet, and would come back and relieve his friend. But Jack did not go to sleep.

He watched his opportunity, and when he saw he could safely do so, he stretched out his arm, took hold of the bottle of eau-de-Cologne, and emptied it down his throat. Then he leaned back, exhausted. The stillness misled the inexperienced nurse, who, seating himself on a chair, dozed off.

By this time the spirituous essence was burning Jack up. He felt on fire, his brain was in a horrible whirl. ten million demons surrounded him, mocking and insulting, while they dug their burning claws into his living flesh, and tore him into ribbons. He could not do battle with them, for they were so much stronger, more cunning than he; but he would try to get away.

Slowly and painfully he rose, trying to brush aside the demons and their attendant imps with his feverish hands. Stealthily he crept to the cabin door, despairingly pressing forward to escape the infernal crew, and made his way on deck.

It was a moonless but starlit night, black masses of deck houses and rigging cast dense shadows on the snowy p anks. Suddenly the demons left him, all but one, who perched on his head, digging great claws into his temples. for there before him stood his guardian angel, his little white-clad Mary, with a glowing radiance about her tossing curls.

She seemed to beckon to him, and he went. Then he stood still and frantically tried to clutch the fiend on his head, for between him and his angel came the grinning Black Shaitan. As he hesitated, the legion of devils swarmed about him again, tearing him to pieces, while the chief, the Black Shaitan, advanced towards the angel Mary, gibbering and salaaming. With a yell that awakened every soul on board, Captain Jack dashed forward, upsetting the mild Hindoo barber, and seizing terrified little Muriel in his strong arms, plunged overboard.

Cries and hurried orders were heard on all sides. The engines were reversed and the ship stopped. Boats were lowered, and search-lights flashed over the phosphorescent waters, but poor demon-tormented Captain Jack, and his guardian angel, Muriel, were never seen again of man. Cadogan Rothery.

Amongst the Killed.

A man of method was old Mr. Staples. He always came down to breakfast at the same time, and always expected to find his daughter at the table before him, so that he could begin his meal without any preliminary skirmishing.

Breakfast over he would produce a battered old briar, and sit down for half-an-hour or so over the *Standard*.

He was a widower. His daughter Janet looked after him, though, truth to tell, he did not want much looking after, for a more independent old gentleman it would have been hard to find.

It was a fine spring morning. Mr. Staples finished his breakfast, produced his pipe, got out his paper—all according to rule.

"The situation in the East—murder in Yorkshire—speech by the Premier—ah-um, yes. Dear! dear! Janet my dear, there's some more fighting in South Africa; I wonder if Roger—Good Heavens!" The old gentleman suddenly dropped the paper as though it had been a living coal, and springing to his feet, gazed at his daughter with a face almost piteous in the intensity of its horror.

In an instant Janet had caught his alarm. Her face paled.

"Father, father!" she cried, "what is it?"

The old man pulled himself together. He put his arm round his daughter: "My dear, my dear," he said "the Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, ble——" but he got no further, for in a moment Janet had broken loose from his grasp, and snatched up the fallen newspaper. "Roger!" she cried; "Roger, he is hurt! Oh, father, where is it?"

But as she spoke, her quick eyes caught the passage that had caused her father's cry of anguish, those few simple words that meant so much to her:

A Brush With The Matabele.

. . . . Amongst the killed are George Smith, Roger Furneaux—

The words danced before her eyes. Another moment she had fainted.

* * * * *

Roger Furneaux sat in his comfortable office in Johannesburg. He felt particularly happy that morning. Things were going exceptionally well with him, so well indeed, that at the present rate it would be a case of good-bye to the Cape in a few months or so, and then hurrah for home and Janet.

He leaned back in his seat and gazed out through the window at the steel-blue sky. He wondered what Janet was doing at that moment. An idea suddenly came to him. He would go home and surprise her as soon as ever he had finished his "money grubbing." He had as yet told her no word of his unexpected good fortune, how he had so miraculously "made his pile." He pictured her joy. At that moment came a knock at the door.

"Come in," he cried.

The door opened and a man entered, a big, brawny, bearded fellow, with a battered straw hat upon his head, clad for the rest in garments which a scarecrow would have felt ashamed to wear.

Furneaux regarded his strange visitor with evident surprise; the man hesitated a moment. A mirthless laugh escaped him.

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"Furnie!" he said.

Roger sprang to his feet. "Furnie" had been his nickname at school; "who——"

Again the man uttered his mirthless laugh. "You don't know me?" he said bitterly. "I'm Jack Playfair!"

"Jack Playfair!" In an instant Furneaux had hold of the big man's hand. "Jack! Jack!" he cried, "what are you doing here?"

"What many another ne'er-do-weel is," answered the other recklessly, "nothing! I am off to the veld to-morrow, and I looked in to see you for auld lang syne's sake, and also——" he hesitated, "to beg an old suit of clothes, if you have such a thing."

"Why, of course, man," answered Furneaux, "but you must stay here a bit with me. Why must you go off into the wilds?"

But the other stopped him.

"No, no, Furneaux. I am a failure. I am beyond all that sort of thing. Let the past be the past. I shouldn't have looked in to worry you now, only"—his voice broke— "I wanted to see an old face. I've come a cropper. So say no more."

Neither could Furneaux shake him from his purpose. All Playfair would allow his old schoolfellow to do was to fit him out from his wardrobe. He would have no pecuniary help. The next day they parted for ever.

* * * *

Six months had gone by since that morning when Janet Staples learned that she had lost her lover, and in that short time the colour had died down from her cheeks, and dark shadows had formed round her sad blue eyes.

It had never occurred to her to doubt the truth of that meagre statement in *The Standard*. Why should it have? There could not be two Roger Furneauxes in South Africa. Besides, she had had no letter from him since that date. He would surely have written to her had he been alive. Poor child, how could she know of his plan to take her by surprise?

The door of the sitting-room was flung open.

But one evening came a ring at the bell, a furious, impatient peal. Then a man's voice asking for her. The colour rushed to her cheeks.

Who could it be? She heard the front door open. That voice!

The door of the sitting-room was flung open. The next moment she was in Roger's arms, neither did she swoon away, as is fashionable in novels on such occasions, or shrink back in alarm for fear that it was a ghost. She said nothing. It was only after the joy of the first embrace that she ventured to speak.

"I thought you were dead, Roger," she said, and then her lover had to kiss the tears away—tears of utter joy.

The truth soon came out.

Poor Jack Playfair had gone out into the veld, there to fall a victim to a Matabele assegai. There had been nothing to identify him—nothing save the marking upon his clothes, so that in the hastily-dug grave, far away on the South African veld, the supposed remains of Roger Furneaux still lay in their last rest.

There was but one other explanation. Roger's silence. Why had he not written?

"I wanted to surprise you, darling," he said. "I knew you didn't expect me to make my fortune so soon. So I said nothing. I only worked on, and looked forward to the time when I should be able to come home and claim you. How I wish now that I had let you know my plans!"

There was no need for them to wait longer. They were married. At the present they are living in London. And old Mr. Staples lives with them.

Over Roger's writing-table hangs a newspaper cutting, framed in black oak, the brief record of that Matabele skirmish. In full it runs as follows:

A Brush with the Matabele.

Danver's Horse were surprised this morning by a body of Matabele, who were repulsed after a severe engagement, with heavy loss, though, unfortunately, not before several of the whites were killed and wounded. Among the killed are Troopers Brown and Morrison; George Smith, Roger Furneaux . . . .

E. Le Breton Martin.

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The Shadow-Hand

By Louis Tracy.

CHAPTER XX.

Wheeler *v.* Hawke.

Dr. Lemaitre stalked home from the Rue Morcelle in a thundering rage. He found Hawke at his mansion in the Rue de Rome in a somewhat maudlin state. A large sum of money was in Mr. Hawke's pocket. He had been drinking.

"What is it you want here?" asked Lemaitre furiously.

"Nothing, mate. A friend's a friend, I suppose?"

"Drunken ass! Make haste, before I kick you down the stairs!"

"Why, what's the matter? I am in luck's way; so are you. We're all in luck's way!"

"You are a vile idiot, Hawke! She is gone, I tell you—flown! We might just as well never have found her! The money I have crammed your pockets with, you dog, was *for nothing*. If you do not find her by this time to-morrow——"

"Gone?" said Hawke in tipsy surprise. "More fool you to *let* her go!"

"Very well, sir. Will you leave my house at once, and do not dare to show your face here until you come with news that you have found her again. You understand me?"

"All very fine, mate, but——" said Mr. Hawke, lifting himself heavily from his seat and backing away, observing danger in Lemaitre's eye and flushed face.

In a deep corner of his heart he had a secret dread of Lemaitre's rage. The next day he refrained from drink, and began his search for Edith.

Cécile had already been in Paris for about two weeks She had called at 17, Rue de Printemps, on Dr. Danton, and found the house locked up. A neighbour of No. 17 informed her that a Dr. Lemaitre had lived there for some years.

"And also a Dr. Danton?" she asked.

"No—at least I never saw him."

Cécile said to herself: "Did he live there secretly, then? Or were his letters only addressed from there?" She added aloud:

"Dr. Lemaitre was married, I think?"

"Oh, yes! His wife was supposed to be rather afraid of him, though violent-tempered herself. One could sometimes hear his powerful voice calling 'Julie!' half down the length of the street."

If Danton's letters were addressed to Lemaitre's house, Cécile decided that their intimacy must have been even greater than if they had lived together.

"I must find Lemaitre," she said; "he is the clue to Danton, as Danton is the clue to Edith."

One day she ran across Inspector Wheeler in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré.

"Well, now, miss, this *is* a meeting, now," said Mr. Wheeler, shaking her hand with beaming face; "I did not expect this pleasure——"

"Nor I," said Cécile. "What are you doing here?"

"Hawke, miss, Hawke; Hawke's in Paris as sure as you see that sun shining there, and before another two days are over, this hand's going to pat him on the shoulder."

"I hope so, Inspector, if it will give you pleasure. This is my address, and you may call upon me for a chat, if you have time. I may tell you meantime that I have discovered that the Thorgill Beck murder was most likely committed by a man—a doctor—called Lemaitre, a tall, pale man, who wears coloured waistcoats. Leave Hawke to go, Inspector, and find *him*. If you search his things, and find a travelling rug with blood-red hairs, you will guess that he is the right; if you find a mauve-coloured overcoat as well, you will be convinced that he is the right; but suppose you find two or three of the red hairs still sticking to the back of the mauve coat? Then, Inspector, you will be absolutely certain that he is the right."

She tripped away. The Inspector, with wide, wondering eyes, looked after her.

"Well, if she isn't the queerest fish—and she's plenty of brains, that's quite certain. But Hawke's the man to get hold of. Hawke first, the rest after. Hawke's at the bottom of a good deal of the mischief done in this world."

"The poor Inspector!" Cécile was saying to herself. "He is joined to his idols. He will never do or find anything or anybody until he gets Hawke off his mind."

Hawke, meanwhile, in mortal dread of the scourge of Lemaitre's anger, was putting all his wits and energy to work in order to find Edith.

He made a list of all the *modistes* of Paris. He reasoned shrewdly that Edith would not, in her inexperience, think of a new

He had a secret dread of Lemaitre's rage.

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The two cabs dashed . . . through the streets.

mode of making a living, but would seek it in the old way at a new point. In the purlieus of these shops he loitered whole days, eating out his stale heart with *ennui*, pining for the wine-bottle and gaming-table.

One evening, as he was about to move away from one of these establishments, he lifted up his eyes and saw Wheeler quietly watching him.

Hawke's heart gave one bound, and his bronzed, hard-skinned face went a dirty yellow. But only for an instant. In the next he was himself again, coolly calculating his chances of escape.

Like lightning a series of thoughts passed through the rascal's world-wise brain.

"He sees that I am well-dressed" (Hawke had on a frock coat over his broad round bulk, and over the abyss of his paunch hung a watch-chain), "he knows that I am up to something, and whether he has proof or not, he feels justified in arresting me. He means to do it. But he mustn't. I've got too much money on me. Here's for it! There's ten yards between Wheeler and me. He don't know Paris, I shouldn't think. Only pity is, I am getting so jolly heavy."

But Mr. Wheeler still had some lightness in the legs which had already served him many a good turn. Hawke bolted. Wheeler, a much younger man, a much taller, but heavy too, was after him. In less than a minute Hawke had sprawled and dived into a passing *fiacre*, and bidden the driver fly his hardest. He knew the world too well to imagine that he could escape in that way; he knew that there were more *fiacres* than one in Paris, and that Wheeler would follow him in another. But he had his plan, his head was cool. "I always *could* outwit Wheeler," he said to himself, "except just that once when he nabbed me."

His aim in getting into the cab was to gain time. Wheeler was after him, and the two cabs dashed, rattling at a mad gallop through the streets, both occupants looking out and spurring their drivers to still wilder efforts.

Hawke had given as a direction to his Jehu the Rue de l'Enfer, in the Marais. It is a narrow, winding alley, without pavements, dark and filthy. One night, during his six weeks' spree in Paris, he had been taken to an old house in this Rue de l'Enfer by an English fellow-hater of the police, who had long lived in Paris, an old pal of Hawke's, a man of the same crimes and class, perhaps even more desperate than Mr. Hawke. The old house, totally unoccupied, was falling to pieces in a courtyard of broken slabs, and stood back a little way from the street. Its black and damp interior was bare of furniture; but in a small kitchen at the back stood a rotting table on three legs against the wall; and here Hawke and his companion had drunk in wicked friendship, and slept till morning.

It was on waking on the floor late in the day that Mr. Hawke had discovered a secret of the room, of which he made a note for future use.

While the cab was still in motion he paid his man, and pelted from it into the doorless front of the old building.

Wheeler was close behind him.

"Stop, Hawke, or I fire!" rang the voice of the Inspector through the echoing desolation of the almost floorless house.

But on rushed Hawke, dodging, slamming the remains of doors in the Inspector's face, his short legs racing at their widest angle of urgency.

He had the almost complete darkness of the bat-haunted old building in his favour, but his dull, heavy tramp, sounding on the wet boards, guided his pursuer.

Every here and there, the flooring yawned black where a piece was missing, and they were both every moment in imminent danger of snapping their legs short off as they ran. At last, Hawke went crashing ponderously down. And the next moment Wheeler tumbled over him.

"Got you, Hawke!" panted Wheeler, instantly slipping on a pair of handcuffs.

"Well, Wheeler, you have," said Hawke, picking himself up. "Fair's fair—you have. I admit it, Wheeler."

Mr. Hawke's hands rested, riveted together, upon his frock-coated paunch. Wheeler had him by the sleeve, panting through his open mouth.

"Game's up, Hawke, my boy!"

"Not *too* soon, Wheeler!" shouted Hawke in a roaring voice, and at the same time, with a violent wrench, twisted his arm free.

The mad race recommenced through the ancient, black, and echoing halls. Hawke was handcuffed, but a man does

"Stop, Hawke, or I fire!"

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He disappeared —suddenly and utterly.

not run with his hands. The old fellow, as he flew, felt once more the joy of his wild, bad youth, the old forgotten devilries caroling in his blood.

He reached the kitchen where he had had the carouse with his pal. It was at the end of the house, on the side farthest from the Rue de l'Enfer. A beam of moonlight shone in through the broken roof and the floorless rafters of the two upper floors.

Hawke ran, and laid his back against the wall at the farthest end, opposite the door by which he had entered. Immediately afterwards Wheeler rushed in, and drew up near the door, pointing his revolver.

"Hawke," he said, "if you move again, I shoot."

"Well, Wheeler, you see, I can't run any further," panted Hawke; "if you want me, come and take me."

The Inspector with rapid stalk moved towards him; but midway across the room he disappeared—suddenly and utterly. There was a cry of horror, and a loud splash of water from beneath.

He had walked over a doorless opening in the flooring, and fallen through the trap into a puddle below.

Here it was utterly dark. He found himself in a small, deep cellar with rough, damp walls, from which he could discover no egress.

As Hawke walked away, he said to himself, with a merry laugh:

"Well, poor old Wheeler! he ain't a bad sort, is Wheeler. But I always said I could out-wit him. I must send somebody in the morning to git him out of that there hole."

He himself waited in the ruins till the streets were perfectly empty; then he stole his way with many a pause and ...r, towards Lemaitre's house in the Rue de Rome.

CHAPTER XXI.

Evil Devices.

...re, lost as Edith was to him, had an infallible ...unicating with her.

...lo was to insert whatever he wished to say in the paper in which her eyes had met the advertisement of Cécile. He, too, had seen the advertisement later on, and recognised it as the cause of her flight, and he knew that ever after she would be sure to search the columns of that particular paper for messages from Cécile to her.

He therefore used it as the medium of a series of *avertissements* directed to her, praying her to reveal her whereabouts, not to believe the evil spoken of him. All these he signed with his name, but received no token from her.

At last, when nearly mad with longing, he had a thought. He put into the paper this message:

To Edith.—Everything has been cleared up satisfactorily. Stay away no longer from us. Lady H—— is very ill. So am I. To-morrow, at three, shall be at No. 11, Rue Taitbout, waiting for you.—Arthur.

No. 11, Rue Taitbout, was a large, unoccupied, and empty house, purchased by Lemaitre a day or two previously.

To his joy, Edith replied to this message in the same newspaper. She said:

I mistrust. What is cleared up? Must see Arthur's signature and crest reproduced.—Edith.

In order to pay for the insertion of these words she had gone to bed supperless that night.

Lemaitre frowned. Arthur's signature and crest? She had, then, faith in the word of this brainless soldier and not in *him?* A dark flash of anger, of cruel jealousy, overspread his face.

The signature and crest were easily obtained. Arthur had written to him a letter mentioning the breach of his word after the duel. Lemaitre simply cut off the name and the crest at the top, and sent it to the paper to be reproduced with the following words:

Edith,—To-morrow at 11, Rue Taitbout. Do not fail. Your obstinacy is dreadful. Herewith crest and signature.—Arthur Musgrave.

On the morrow Edith did not come. All day Danton walked from end to end of a long corridor of the empty house in mad haste, like a man tormented with furies.

On the third day Edith answered, not having the necessary money before:

Still mistrust. What were the last words that passed between us in the lane? Answer at once.—Edith.

She was shrewd enough to know that the advertisements might not come from Arthur at all, but from Hawke, Lemaitre, anybody. But if the advertiser could give the last words spoken between Arthur and her in the lane on the night of Arthur's tipsy outbreak of passion, brought about by Cécile's cunning—words which none but they two had heard—that would be fully convincing, and in view of his assertion that something or other had been "cleared up satisfactorily," she would then consider the advisability of emerging again into the light of day.

It may be supposed that, at this message of Edith's, Dr. Lemaitre was utterly non-plussed. How could he possibly know what these "last words" were? But the man, now in a state bordering on frenzy, did not for a moment despair or doubt. Impossibilities seemed easy to him; a thousand difficulties, a thousand lives that came between him and her he would sweep away. He immediately set about the discovery of those last words.

He would see Captain Musgrave at once. He would tear the words from the officer's throat. He sent on his trunk to the *Gare du Nord.* That night he would start for Calais.

But fortune favoured him singularly. In the afternoon, as he drove in his stately *equipage à quatre,* leaning back wearily in the brougham, through the Bois de Boulogne, his keen eye caught sight of Arthur standing in the well-dressed crowd a little way from the carriage-path. Lemaitre at once pulled the check-rein and got out.

Arthur, within a few days, was to leave Europe for Egypt. The —th Hussars had been ordered to the front.

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He had come to Paris, during a short leisure, to bid a sick-hearted farewell to civilisation, guessing that he would be in the same city as his love, and knowing that Cécile was here. Cécile's presence had somehow lately come to mean for Arthur a strange consolation and solace. It was only when near her that he now found the least assuagement from the despair which made all life bitter to him. If he had a hope left it was a hope in Egypt and the peace-giving bullets of the Mamalukes.

A little distance away, unknown to him, stood his servant and shadow, Tom Wilson.

"Captain Musgrave—I am delighted to see you," said Lemaitre, standing before him.

Arthur stared up into the pasty face, grown hideously sallow of late, with a stare which few men could have borne.

"Do not any longer play the child," said Lemaitre; "we are not children; we are men of the world. I have business of the utmost seriousness with you. You think, no doubt, that Miss Wentworth is with me—in my house——"

"Frightful ruffian," sighed Arthur faintly.

"Yes, I say, you are playing the child. Listen to me, sir, and be a man! How dare you act with this flippancy when matters of such moment are involved? It now depends entirely upon you whether Miss Wentworth be restored to her friends or not. At present I pledge you my honour that I do not know where she is."

"Danton, you have no honour. You are most certainly a great rascal. And as for Miss Wentworth, she is entirely at liberty to dispose of her actions. I do not care a straw where she is."

"You do! You do!" cried Danton. "Englishmen of your class despise a certain kind of lying—lying which is serviceable, and results in some practical advantage; but you will yourselves tell any number of foolish lies, like the one *you* have just told, for the sake of keeping up a shallow pretence of silly *nonchalance*. I am astonished that you should persist in such conduct!"

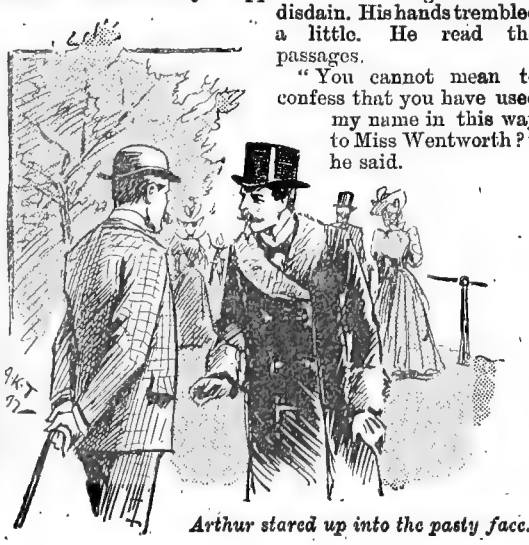
It was like a father rating his son.

"I shall certainly have you locked up in some sort of gaol, if you do not go away," drawled Arthur.

"You *do* persist in it, then?" cried Danton. "But you shall not. In kindness to yourself, I will not let you. See here—I will show you the means by which our friend may be recovered, if you are not too great a child to refuse to see it," he drew from a pocket some newspapers, and pointed one by one to his advertisements, and the answer from Edith.

Arthur had suddenly dropped from his high horse of disdain. His hands trembled a little. He read the passages.

"You cannot mean to confess that you have used my name in this way to Miss Wentworth?" he said.



Arthur stared up into the pasty face.

"Yes—I *do* mean to confess it! Do you not see that all this is not fun—not child's play—but dreadfully earnest? Miss Wentworth, I have reason to think, is suffering acute poverty and anguish in her hiding-place. Is it likely that I would hesitate to use whatever was the readiest means to hand to induce her to come back to happiness?"

"I see," said Arthur, "you do not stick at a sort of crime whenever it will assist your purposes?"

"No more of that, sir! The question is, are you prepared to insert in the paper the 'last words' spoken between you and Miss Wentworth in whatever 'lane' it is she refers to; and so induce her to meet us?"

"Yes," said Arthur; "I will do so; but she will not meet *us*, Danton; she will meet *me*."

"You speak just like a child," said Danton pityingly; "what do you mean?"

"I mean that I shall put another address in my advertisement, not the Rue Taitbout; an address at which you will not be—for you will not know it."

Danton smiled.

"But do you think," he said, "that I will not see your message to her in the paper, and the address you give? Do you suppose I shall not be there? I cannot think that you are serious. If you put your message in another paper, it is fifty to one that she will not see it. And if you alter the address of the Rue Taitbout, you probably rouse her suspicion, and cause her to keep away. She is at present shyer than a bird, you know. And it would serve no useful purpose. *You* will be at the Rue Taitbout with me when she arrives. Everything will be fair and open. Her subsequent conduct must be left to her own will. Do I not speak reasonably?"

Arthur did not answer.

"It only remains that you put your message in the paper to-morrow; or tell me the words, and I will insert them for both of us."

"Very well, Danton—since I am doomed, it seems, to be associated with a creature of your kind. The 'last words' in question were: 'Good-bye. I shall write later.' You may be sure, meanwhile, in case you be tempted to play any trick with the address in the way of alteration, that I shall keep my eye on every edition of the paper; and I shall be at the spot in good time."

Dr. Danton, with a slight glance of contempt, turned, mounted his brougham, which leaned and creaked to his weight, and drove away. The next evening there appeared in the Courier de Soir this advertisement:

Edith,—How mistrustful! The last words were: "Good-bye. I shall write later." The day after to-morrow (Friday) at three, No. 11, Rue Taitbout. Do not fail.—Arthur.

When Lemaitre read this notice he threw himself backward in his chair, looked upward, and said:

"*Now*, Captain Musgrave, I think I have you safe in my hands! and you, too, Edith—my love! my life! never more, for ever, to lose you!"

Musgrave, reading the same notice, said: "But why the day *after* to-morrow? Why not to-morrow? I have little time to lose on account of this Egyptian mess."

The day "*after* to-morrow" was chosen by Dr. Lemaitre because he needed time; he had certain preparations to make. He was a very learned man. His knowledge of subtle and obscure poisons was far more wide and profound than that of most medical men. He had made the subject of *poisons* his special study for years.

Arthur had promised to see Cécile on the next day. But having to visit the Embassy in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, and to provide himself an outfit of tropical clothes, he found himself too busy.

"To-morrow," he said, late at night, "after I have seen Edith, will be the best time. I will take her with me to Miss Delisle's hotel."

To-morrow! What it will bring forth is wrapped in a darkness blacker than the blackest midnight.

(*To be continued.*)

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LITTLE CORA.

I.

The little model looked charming in her Directoir hat, with her pretty, close-fitting dress of striped pink, and disordered frizzy black hair, while the painter gradually and tenderly developed on the canvas the outline of her supple little form—her youthful figure dimly showing beneath the gauze-like material of her old-fashioned costume.

"Ah! Monsieur Georges, this dress is pretty, very pretty, but it isn't what I should choose to be painted in!" She spoke with a soft Creole accent, very tenderly, with her face upturned—the copper-coloured pale face of an Arabian child—and opening wide her big, melancholy black eyes.

"And how would you like to be painted then, Mademoiselle Cora?"

The little model became enthusiastic all at once as a thought flashed through her mind, and she answered with trembling voice:

"What do I wish? As a Sister of Mercy I should like to see myself!"

"A Sister of Mercy?"

"Yes, with those great white wings which flap at each side of the face. They are beautiful, and it is so good to be a Sister of Mercy. I should like to be one. I a Sister of Mercy instead of——"

She stopped, and her black eyes filled with tears.

"If you cry, little Cora, your costume won't suit you."

It was in the studio of my young friend Georges, two doors from the church of St. Vincent de Paul, the towers of wh ch stood out against the sky, grey against the blue—the blue of a sky in May.

The little model was far away from the picture in which she figured. Her look, full of a melancholy despair, became fixed on the church towers.

"Sister of Mercy."

Her lips, of a deep vivid red, repeated under her breath the words that she had just spoken so regretfully, "Sister of Mercy."

"And how are you now?" asked the artist, still continuing his picture while Cora posed at a little distance from him in the light.

"How am I, M. Georges? Very well—I am quite well! I—I think I shall go out! The doctor has given me a draught with ether in it which has done me good. I sleep better——"

She coughed a little, adding quickly as if to excuse—or was it to deceive?—herself.

"I have still a cough, but such a little! Oh, it is going away, M. Georges. I am quite well. What does not go——"

She stopped and tried to smile, her childish face, the tiny nose, the delicate little ears, all expressing with terrible sadness her vain effort to appear cheerful.

"What does not go is the headache!"

"Or the heart-ache. You still think of him always?"

"Always, yes, always! And I always will think of him," repeated the poor Creole.

Ah! The romance of little Cora! In the heart of this woman-child there was a vision of suffering. Life had dealt hardly with her, and had brought this melancholy look to her face. The breath of love had whispered amongst her curly locks, and had saddened her full lips, which were only made for kisses and smiles.

Yes, there was in the whole world a someone who for her was *the* someone to whom her thoughts would always turn; someone who had forgotten her, doubtless, who thought no more of her; someone of whom she only knew the first name, "Pierre," a name repeated thousands of times, as sweet to her as a caress. She loved this name. It was all that remained of her past, not very far back either, for how old was little Cora? Eighteen years!

"But," said she sadly, "one is old at eighteen in my country, especially"— and she tried to drown with her laugh the sorrow her words expressed—"when one hasn't had good luck."

II.

"Who was M. Pierre?" She still called him that just as when she had first addressed him, down there in Réunion.

"Who was he? Lieutenant in the Marine Infantry, and so noble, so good! Little, like me, very fair, with a small moustache turned up at the ends, which I loved to curl with my finger tips, when he would let me."

"We loved each other at once, as the way is. Why not when one is free, and knows that one can please oneself? My parents were dead. I lived there with an old aunt, who wished to make me a milliner. It was a good idea. The hats that were made in the island, they were pretty! And Pierre, he was so good. I used to say to myself: 'Seeing that he loves me, he will make me his wife. I love him only. I will always love him only. I am an honest girl, as he is an honest man, and I love him, with all my power, with all my heart.' When he held me in his arms and I leaned against the officer's stripes on his uniform, I felt prouder than if they had made President of the Republic!

"There are Marine Infantry barracks in the suburb of Poissonière. When I pass them, on my way to the Rue Lafayette, I stop, M. Georges, and gaze at the men, their uniforms, their yellow epaulettes, and I say to myself, 'Perhaps I will see him!' He may not be in Paris, but I hope always, and when I have looked for a moment at them, my eyes fill with tears—all the past is before me.

"I see the island, the sea, the ship 'down there,' our sky, our trees. All these pass before me like a dream. They haven't the white uniform of the tropics here, but there they are nevertheless, the same as at my home. Then I remember and say to myself: 'You are stupid, my poor Cora; all that is done with; you are no longer in Réunion—you are in Paris'—Paris is melancholy, and hard to live in!

"I think longingly of the time when I acted as interpreter for him. I have been on a campaign, you know! I went with the Marine Infantry to Madagascar. I liked it—the swamp, the fatigue. He had under his command the volunteers of Réunion. I marched with them, yes, I. I was not afraid, I assure you. I was amused by the cannonading at Majunja, and also when we were attacked on board the *Bonnemary*. We heard the whistling of the balls—pss! pss!—but what did that matter to me? I was with him!

"His men adored him as I did. The lieutenant! When they said 'The Lieutenant' you would think they were speaking of a god. And when he said to them 'Go,' they went. When we made a dash through the

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jungle he went first. He took great strides, and I with my small steps walked beside him. We nearly disappeared in the grass. Sometimes we hid there, and I kissed him while the shots were flying all around. I had a charm given me by a native sorcerer that preserved us.

"The captain, who had authorised me to go as interpreter with the column, died of lock-jaw one night. He had received a wound which he neglected and continued the march. Pierre nursed him better than any doctor, but he died saying: 'This is terrible! I wished to die facing the Germans. Ah! This dog of a country! Lieutenant, I give over my men to you. Take back as many as you can to France, the brave boys!' I still hear his voice. His cry 'Die here! Die here!'

"I think of it all, and say to myself: 'In spite of the fatigue, the firing, the scarcity of water, the swamp where death lurked, the nights when the enemy was ready to take us by surprise, it was a good time. I would live through every hour again!' But it is all over now, alas, and one beautiful day the column returned to Tamatave.

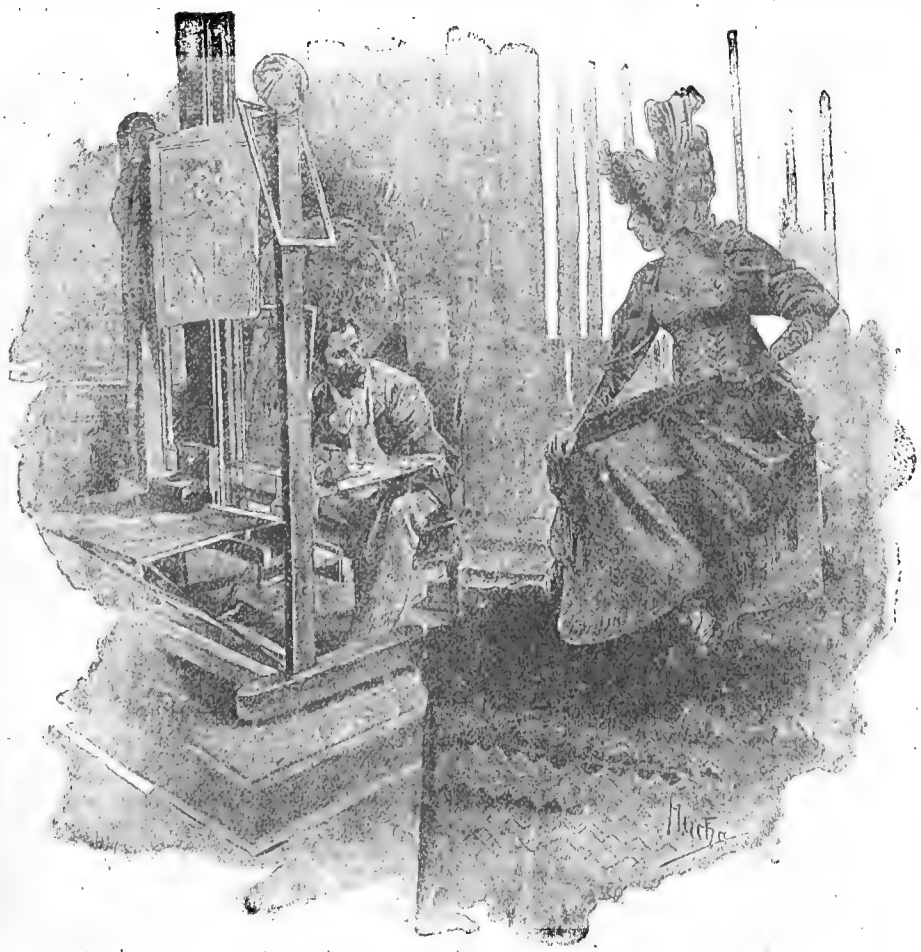
"We had buried the captain in a hole with many others far away. Pierre was in command, and returned in triumph, burnt by the sun as black as I. The governor complimented him. Ah! those compliments! I was wild with joy at his success. I said to him, 'They will make you a Colonel, at least!' 'A Captain, you are quite silly, my little Cora.' He was right, I was very foolish, but if they had made him a General right away I would have thought it only just.

"If I had only guessed that that campaign was going to separate us—that he would be recalled to France, to Paris, because of his advancement! Nevertheless, that was what happened. He told it me joyously one morning, not noticing that it made me sad. He was leaving for France, and he seemed astonished to see tears in my eyes.

"'Probably,' he said, 'he would find on arrival his nomination for promotion.' I was content because he was, but I was also grieved, yes, grieved, because he did not understand the pain I felt in spite of his joy—or because of his joy—who knows?

"He couldn't take me with him, it seemed. It was impossible. A government vessel wasn't like the swamp; one couldn't hide in it. But, at least, if he couldn't take me with him he could write to me. Oh, yes, he promised me that. Has he forgotten Cora, his little Cora?

"Then he said. 'You would make a pretty picture.' I was fated to be a model, M. Georges, you see. That gave him heart to leave me, I knew. It was in vain I pleaded, 'Hide me somewhere, take me away. You take your treasure, why not me? I will make myself so small, no one will see me!' No. Always the same answer. 'You are silly,' or 'You are foolish.' Yes, one is often so when one loves much.



The little model looked charming.

"And then the day came when the ship was to sail. The farewell was said, the last kiss given, and the last prayer whispered in his ear. 'You will write to me, you will write to me?'

"The last caress of his fair moustache was on my lips. 'Yes, little Cora, I will write.'

"Then the boat took him away. He waved his hand, went on board the ship, and disappeared, as if a great shark had swallowed him. The ship sailed further and further away and became so small that the smoke was all one could see. Then that became a mere speck, which grew smaller and smaller until—there was nothing. Nothing! No more Pierre, no more

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love! Little Cora alone in the world, with no one to care for.

"At first I said: 'He will come back,' or again, 'I'll forget, one always forgets in time,' but the days passed, I didn't forget, and he didn't come. You can understand how sad I was, I cared for nothing — a great weariness and longing to die came over me.

"To die, yes! I thought of that more than once! because life wasn't worth living without him. Then an idea came to me, foolish but settled, if he wouldn't come to me I would go to him. I would find him. I must go to France—to Paris—as he was there. Then sou by sou, working as hard as I could at the hats, I saved the passage in the mail boat to Marseilles, third class. You will laugh when I tell you that I used to say to myself, 'I will easily find him there.' And do you know where I expected to find him? In the Great Square. I pictured Paris as a big village, as at my home, with a great square, where there was music and where the market was held, and which was a general rendezvous for everybody.

"I can still hear all M. Castelbiel said."

"When I told the people on the boat, 'I'm going to look for someone in the Great Square in Paris,' they laughed at me, thinking I was joking. But I let them laugh. I had an idea that I would see Pierre there, walking along with his broad sword by his side, and with his pretty helmet of white cloth.

"With that idea I came to Paris. I did not even stay a day at Marseilles, but came straight on and asked at the little hotel where I stopped, 'The Great Square; please where is the Great Square?' You can imagine how the landlady and the boys opened their eyes. 'The Great Square,' they said, 'there were many great squares, la Place de la Concorde, la Place Royal, la Place de la Madeleine, la Place de la Republique, and others. Many houses, and many squares.' And all these streets and boulevards, they frighten me even now. I felt bewildered. Where had I come to? How could I find Pierre in this village, which was a world? I went here and there, I looked, I asked, I saw that people thought me mad.

"At the Government Office they asked me, 'Have you the name, the Christian name, and the rank of this Pierre?' No, I had nothing. I called him Pierre and I loved him, that was all I knew. I went to the office at the barracks but they were so rude to me there and treated me like a tramp, so that I dared not go again. The wearers of the yellow epaulettes, when I asked them in the street, laughed at me, or tried to laugh with me, which was worse. Then I said to myself, 'Wait; trust to chance, little Cora!' That was silly and foolish, wasn't it?

"I came to Paris knowing nothing, and with only sixty-five francs in my pocket, which soon melted away. When I returned at night to my bare little room in the Rue de Lyon, I often longed for Réunion and Tamatave. I cried then, drying my eyes, I said to myself: 'No matter, little Cora, you were quite right to come. You will find him. Among all these men who pass you will see him one day or other. Courage, my child!' I was brave. Among all these people I knew no one. I felt like a pebble in the sea. Then, how would I live when I had spent my last sou? Hats? I didn't know how to make any like those I saw in the shop windows. I was afraid when I thought of it.

"Without having found him, either in the 'Great Square,' you understand, or anywhere else, I came to such a pass that I hadn't money to pay for my room, and had to ask myself what I was going to eat the next day and whether I would drown myself that evening! It is true, M. Georges, I had come to that! And I said so to the landlady. I went to all the milliners, I was so anxious to get work. After all, I was clever with my fingers. She was a good woman, the landlady. She said she would get me a situation. It was she who saved me from dying from starvation.

"Among her lodgers was a former manager of a theatre in Algiers. He had come to Paris with a whole cargo of Arabian costumes, dresses of gauze, silk handkerchiefs, sequins, a quantity of Turkish slippers, and two big Algerian Jewesses, sisters, I believe, whom he had induced to come to Paris telling them that he was going to get up an Algerian entertainment like the one at the music-hall of Tunis in the Rue du Cairo. M. Castelbiel was looking for premises and a company. The former he found in Saint Martin. They put on the door a board with a gold crescent and Arabian characters announcing 'Algerian Theatre of Varieties. Drinks and dances of the choicest.' And the two Jewesses, in native costume, sang Algerian songs. But they couldn't dance, these big massive people, or they danced very badly. 'Too clumsy,' said M. Castelbiel himself, 'much too clumsy!'

"Then the manager thought of me and spoke to Madame Souveraine, the landlady, who took me to him. Would

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I not join him? A hundred sous a day, choice costumes, and for that I had only to dance. 'You don't know how to dance? Quite a mistake. All women can dance, as all ducks can swim. Dancing is part of a woman's charm. You have never done this dance? Ah, well, you look like a dancer. There are many less pretty to look at in the performance at the music hall in the Rue de Cairo, and you will have such a lovely costume of gauze, with a sash of gold, and pink slippers. You want to find someone whom you love in Paris? This is the way to find him, the best way. He is certain to love art, your unknown. When he sees the advertisement of the Algerian Music Hall he will be sure to come to Saint Martin's.'

"I can still hear all M. Castelbiel said. Honeyed words. The idea that I could by having my name on a poster, find Pierre, attract his attention, and see him again, carried the point.

"I put sequins in my hat, and showed my arms through my gauze sleeves, and I danced. M. Castelbiel evidently was right, all women dance well, and at least I didn't dance badly. That dance in the clouds of smoke, with the applause accompanied by the clinking of spoons against the glasses, I shall never forget. Every evening, in the hot air full of tobacco smoke, which got into my throat and made me cough—every evening I anxiously scanned the crowd from the stage, through the mist, to see if he were there attracted by the huge bill where my name appeared in large type, and if in that sea of unknown faces I could not discover Pierre's.

"I searched one face after another, but never saw him. If he had been there I wouldn't have needed the evidence of my eyes to know it. My heart, my eyes, all of me was his. The dance, the tambourines struck by Fatma and Midja, the Algerian songs, accompanying my movements, that was all, but no Pierre. I returned each night to the little room I had taken in Saint Martin, sadder than I used to be in the hotel in the Rue de Lyon.

"I wasn't happy; it bored me, this profession of a mountebank. But what could one do? It was necessary to live.

"Days passed, then months, like a dream. It was so long, and yet it passed so quickly. The Algerian Music Hall wasn't a success. It was closed. M. Castelbiel went away, no one knew where, leaving the two Jewesses to shift for themselves. And then we were asked, Midja, Fatma, and myself, to dance at the Red Mill, the same dance in the interior of a gigantic elephant bought at an establishment which hadn't succeeded during the Exhibition. It was there that you saw me, M. Georges, always dancing, in the body of an elephant this time, and always looking to see if '*he*' were there. I was in despair when I met you, besides being ill with a cough which I caught at the Algerian Hall. There I was worn out with continual dancing to the sound of the tambourine played by those stupid Jewesses.

"When you asked me to sit for you, you saw what pleasure it gave me. It changed me. I breathed another atmosphere. I felt stifled there, and I had a pain in my chest which seemed to burn me. I don't like winter, nor these Paris fogs; I need the sun, you know. The heat from your stove is lovely. I wish the winter were over."

Then a childish smile suddenly came to the pale, fragile face of the little Creole.

"Oh! what I should love above everything else is to have a picture of myself as a Sister of Mercy. I should love to be one."

"You shall have your picture, little Cora, with the white flaps."

"Really?"

She clapped her hands joyously, like a child to whom one had promised a toy.

"Yes, you'll have it."

"All the same it is funny," she said, suddenly becoming sad. "I will never see Pierre again. I will never find him, that is certain! Ah, well, the idea of seeing myself as a Sister of Mercy consoles me. There were Sisters of Mercy 'down there' who nursed the wounded soldiers."

III.

I had carried away a touching remembrance of the little Creole, of her slender and exquisite figure, her

Clothed as an Egyptian dancer.

deep, melancholy eyes, her sweet voice, her tender ways, the resignation in the pretty child, who, to find her lost love had left her native country full of trust, and now was thrown in the hurly-burly, the bustle of this great Paris, saying:

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"Do you know a fair, brave officer called Pierre? and where is the Great Square of the village that I may find him there?"

Poor child! a Sister of Mercy!

Then I lost sight of her, though I sometimes thought with a smile of the childlike trust which had possessed her to cross the sea to follow her lover.

gold ornaments on her brow, her wrists, and in her hair.

Cora, little Cora, the little model whose great desire was to be painted as a Sister of Mercy! She seemed to me transformed, her dark complexion lighted up by the pale glimmer of the footlights, and the contortions of the lithe body of the Creole really gave an idea of Egypt to

A Sister of Mercy.

One evening at the Porte Saint Martin in "Cleopatra," among the slaves grouped round the Queen on her throne, stretched out like a serpent in the sunshine, I thought I recognised the little model of my friend's studio, and, looking through my opera glasses, I found Cora, no longer in the striped silk costume of the affected lady, but clothed as an Egyptian dancer, with

the public assembled, who little knew the romance which saddened the pretty girl with her childlike heart under the gauze draperies. And I said to myself:

"Bah! lost in the turmoil of the gay life in Paris, a favourite on the boards of the theatre, she will forget the past, and adieu to her friend Pierre!"

She was no longer the little ignorant girl arriving in the

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big village to find her lover; she was the much applauded dancer in "Cleopatra," with her photographs for sale in the shop windows. Some months passed, and I had forgotten the little dancer, when a letter recalled her to me—a touching letter, written by her in a piteous and pleading tone. She asked me to back a petition she was sending to the Minister of Marine.

Ill, consumptive, she said, she was afraid to die in Paris. She wanted to return to Réunion, to see the country, the sky, and the sun of former times. She had had enough of this Paris; it was killing her. She longed more to get away even than she had to come to look for Pierre. But to do so it was needful to have money. She trembled lest she should find herself on the ship with this hacking cough and this "ill all over" feeling, of being stifled between decks, and she was begging the Consul to be good enough not to send her steerage, but to let her breathe freely the sea air, and to look at the stars at night.

The mail-boat would leave Marseilles on the third of April, and Cora made her request in January—doubtless she knew that the official reply would be long in coming.

The request of the poor girl was never looked at by the Minister of Marine; but so the formal official reply ran: "She was entered for this matter, in the department of M. the Under-secretary of State of the Colonies, who in turn, had transmitted her, etc., etc."

And coughing in that dreary room, little Cora waited, living as she best could on her savings from the Porte Saint Martin. Her strength, poor child, was fast waning when April came, and the beginning of the spring. She no longer desired to sit for her picture in the white head-dress, as a Sister of Mercy!

"So tired and so thin, I would be so plain. No, no," she said, "I will leave you my photograph taken when I could believe I was pretty. You will paint me from memory with the white head-dress of the Sisters of Mercy. You will see me 'down there.'"

She had gone away by the end of April, the little Cora, gone to the country where her dream was born. The phantom of love which she cherished so long she will find "down there." She will find it more surely than in the crowded streets of the "big village." I often think of her—the beautiful head of the child, her dreaming eyes, the soft, caressing Creole voice, the entreaty of the little model, "Oh, M. Georges, I should like to be painted as a Sister of Mercy; it is so pretty!"

And I say to myself that perhaps over the white pillow where the little Creole had let her brown head fall, some Sister of Mercy's head-dress is already bending "down there," the head-dress which she thought so pretty, like the wings of a white butterfly—and that a woman's voice as sweet as hers, a voice murmuring between the white wings, will have said softly to the little model, the little Cora, so tired, and shutting her eyes for ever:

"Sleep, little Cora, sleep well," and she will be lulled to sleep, under the white wings of a Sister of Mercy's head-dress, to dream of her good friend Pierre, for whom she will look again in the "Great Square" of a bigger village of that other world, vaster and more incomprehensible than ours—the Infinite!

Dream always, little Cora.

* * * * *

Just one week after her departure the news reached Paris of the stranding of a mail steamer running from Réunion to Marseilles. In the list of passengers whose lives were lost was the name of Colonel Pierre de Rivass, who, it appeared, was returning from a flying visit to Réunion after a long absence from Paris on foreign service!

Jules Clarette.

The Old Woman's Money.

We sat in the verandah of a hotel at Seaborough one warm July night. There were half-a-dozen of us, mostly travelled men, and we had met by chance during the holiday season.

One of our number was an old man who, in his earlier days, had acted as scout in the Western States of America. He had joined our circle while Dickson was thrilling us with some train outrage, and when this was finished we taxed him for a story. It was some time before he would speak, at length he began:

"As far as I know, the smoothest trick, prompted by a desire to save money, ever played upon stage robbers occurred near Miles City, U.S.A., in '79. A load of passengers were almost within sight of the town. They had been travelling all day, and were worn out, for the roads were awfully bad in those days, and all coaches bounced and swayed very much. Having come near their journey's end, they were congratulating themselves. Hold-ups had been frequent. Two heavily-armed messengers accompanied each coach, with orders to fire on any person acting suspiciously.

"'Dear me,' said an elderly man near the door, 'I'm glad we are safe. I have all my money with me, and if I lost it, I don't know where I could get more.'

"Two miners and a prospector, each with large rolls, expressed their satisfaction at passing dangerous points safely. The next speaker was a little woman, kind and motherly in her ways.

"'My boy has started a restaurant in town, and is doing well. He wanted me to come and help, so here I am, goodness knows how far away from dear old Ohio. I thought he would need his mother, for these mining towns are wild, I hear, and full of temptations. I have got all the cash I have in the world with me. Fearing robbers, I have put it in a place where no one would think of looking. You cannot guess where.'

"Of course the guesses were all wrong.

"'Well, I have four notes against the sole of my foot inside my left shoe.'

"'Capital!' said the elderly gentleman. 'No one would ever think of looking for money in your shoes.'

"In the far corner at the front sat a small slender, black-haired man. He kept between his feet a little black valise. No one spoke to him during the journey,

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and he made no sound save occasionally to cough in a peculiar manner. Some of the passengers thought him to be a consumptive. Even when general good fellowship prevailed he took no part in the conversation.

"'And you; what would you do if we were held up?'

"A hollow cough and a shrug of his shoulders was all his reply.

"'What a mean fellow!' thought the old gentleman.

"At this instant the coach lurched violently to one side, and bang, bang, bang, came the sudden reports of guns. One messenger was shot, the other compelled to throw up his hands before time for resistance, and consternation and terror prevailed within the coach.

"'Lord, Lord!' prayed the elderly man.

"'Oh dear, oh dear!' cried the woman.

"'Hustle up here, git out,' and one of the robbers held the door open with his left hand; while he covered the passengers with the revolver in his right.

"Of course, they all filed out, and were stood up in a row. There was much trembling on the part of the men, and the poor old woman wept audibly. It only took a few moments to go through the pockets of the line, and to investigate the messenger's small safe. Probably the road-agents would have taken to the hills at this moment had not one of them beheld the frail figure within the coach.

"'Hold on, boys; here's one we forgot?' and he started in with an oath to drag forth the consumptive. As he entered, a most plaintive, cough-interrupted voice greeted him, and, tough as he was, he paused.

"'Please don't make me get out. I am very ill. I will die, I know. If you will only let me be, I will tell you where you can get a lot of cash which you have overlooked. I have no money myself.'

"The robbers outside, having heard the shrill, penetrating voice, glanced at each other. The leader called out to his fellow within the coach:

"'All right, Bill; find out where that money is, and let the pore devil alone. We got to be skipping out.'

"The piping voice took courage. 'Gentlemen, if you will ask that old lady to remove her left shoe, you will find the money.'

"The men began to mutter and scowl. The commercial traveller even found courage enough to say it was a shame to rob a poor old woman, and no one but the most depraved sort of a road-agent would be guilty of such an act. The leader walked up to the speaker, slapped his face, and tickled the end of his nose with the muzzle of his six-shooter. The grumbler discreetly held his tongue until the thieves were gone.

"It was with sighs and sobs that the old lady seated herself on the ground, took the shoe from that fat foot, and handed over her hard-earned savings. In a twinkling it was pocketed, and the outlaws jumped for their horses and were gone.

"What a hubbub broke out when the people found themselves alone once more! With one accord they assailed the man within the coach.

"'Oh, you villain, you wretch, to tell them of my money!' cried the woman as she shook him by the shoulders.

"The commercial entered at this moment. He had been talking to the other men of the party in low tones.

"'Just step out, madam; we want to talk with him,' he said.

"She obeyed, and several entered. It was noticed that the driver had his reins in his hands, and one end of them looked suspiciously like a noose.

"'You rascal,' said the driver, 'to have deliberately given this woman's money over to those outlaws. We'll make short shift of you;' and he threw the noose over the man's head.

"There was a desperate struggle for a moment, and then the noose fell down clean cut through. It was seen that the little man had a knife in his hand. He spoke in a different voice this time.

"'For Heaven's sake, don't bother me here. You can hang me at Miles City as well as here. It's only a little way; I shall not escape. When we get there, I will have something to tell you, which will explain my action. A man always has a right to have a fair hearing before he is hanged, and I claim that privilege.'

"Someone helped the driver with the body of the messenger, and the coach started for town. The others watched the little man intently, but he made no movement, nor did he speak until the coach lumbered up in front of the post-office and hotel; then he said, in a quiet voice:

"'I have £8,000 in this bag. The only way to save it was by telling the robbers of the old woman's money. I am glad to return it to her, and a bit extra for the worry I caused her. As for the rest of you, I have nothing to do with your losses. We all ran the same risk. I wish you good-evening;' and he stepped quickly from his seat to the door, and into the street, dropping a bundle of notes into the lady's lap as he passed."

The old gentleman rose and sauntered down to the pier, and as we looked at one another we realised that he was the hero of the story he had told.

L. T. Gresham.

£90 in Prizes.

£50 *is offered in connection with the PICTURE PUZZLES in HOME NOTES as follows:*

1st PRIZE - Twenty Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE - A Ten-Pound Bank of England Note.
3rd PRIZE - A Five-Pound Bank of England Note.
4th to 13th PRIZES - Ten Sovereigns.
14th to 23rd PRIZES - Ten Half-Sovereigns.

The sketches, of which the first ten appear in **Home Notes** dated April 10th, represent the Christian names of men and women, and the prizes will go to those who correctly solve the greatest number.

£40 *is offered in connection with the PICTURE PUZZLES in THE SUNDAY READER, as follows:*

1st PRIZE - Ten Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE - A Five-Pound Bank of England Note.
3rd PRIZE - One Sovereign.
4th to 9th PRIZES - Five Half-Sovereigns.
And One Hundred Magnificent Five Shilling Books.

The sketches, the first ten of which appear in the number dated February 27th, represent the names of Biblical characters, and the prizes will go to those who correctly solve the greatest number.

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EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS IN THE TREATMENT OF OBESITY.

Our corpulent readers will be glad to learn how to positively lose two stone in about a month with the greatest possible benefit in health, strength and muscle, by a comparatively new system. It is a singular paradox that the patient, returning quickly to a healthy state, with increased activity of brain, digestive and other organs, naturally requires more food than hitherto, yet, notwithstanding this, he absolutely loses in weight 1lb. to 2lb. daily, as the weighing-machine will prove. Thus there is no suggestion of starvation. It is an undoubted success, and the author, who has devoted years of study to the subject, guarantees a noticeable reduction within twenty-four hours of commencing the treatment. This is different with other diseases, for the patient in some cases may go for weeks without being able to test whether the physician has rightly treated him, and may have derived no real or apparent improvement in health. Here, we repeat, the author guarantees it in twenty-four hours, the scale to be the unerring recorder. The treatment aims at the actual root of obesity, so that the superfluous fat does not return when discontinuing the treatment. It is perfectly harmless. We advise our readers to call the attention of stout friends to this, because, sincerely, we think they ought to know. For their information we may say that on sending two penny stamps, a book entitled "Corpulency, and the Cure" (256 pages), containing a reprint of press notices from some hundreds of medical and other journals (British and Foreign) and other interesting particulars, including the "recipe," can be had, post free, from a Mr. F. C. Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C.—*Belfast News Letter.*

CYCLING FOR CORPULENT LADIES.

Cyclists of the fair sex have become so numerous lately, that a special journal to represent and advocate their interests has recently made its appearance. One of the stock subjects discussed by the expert lady contributors is the question of cycle costume for corpulent ladies. This and kindred questions are, however, disposed of by the practical consideration that any lady whose weight is more than proportionate to her height becomes an object of ridicule on a cycle. There are many ladies who have yet scarcely passed their first youth, and who are, nevertheless, so stout that they find themselves debarred from joining in an amusement which has much to recommend it beyond the fact that it is certainly the fashion of the hour. There is, however, no reason for their suffering this deprivation, as any overstout lady may learn by glancing through the pages of Mr. F. Cecil Russell's "Corpulency and the Cure," a copy of the just issued 18th edition of which we have received. This little book of 256 pages is sent post free to any address on receipt of two penny stamps, forwarded to the author's offices, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. From the evidence of the innumerable letters which Mr. Russell has received, it is certain that many ladies belonging to the highest social circles, who are now cycling daily, owe their ability to do so to the success which has attended their submission to Mr. Russell's course of treatment. His method recommends itself in a special manner to those who are anxious to take a sufficiency of physical exercise. With the rapid reduction of the weight effected by Mr. Russell's preparation, and the consequent rejuvenation and ability to cycle or otherwise utilise the limbs, naturally comes an increase of appetite. "Do not give way to it," the old-fashioned obesity authorities would say, "or else you will get fat again." "Nonsense!" the author of "Corpulency," etc., says in effect: "I have removed the cause of obesity by enabling the proper organs to perform their natural function of getting rid of unnecessary fat. You can eat and drink anything in reason;" and the evidence which Mr. Russell adduces shows that he is justified in making this bold statement. He is, unquestionably, a successful revolutionist in the cure of Corpulency.—*Leeds Saturday Journal.*

CORPULENCY: INCREASING POPULARITY OF AN EFFECTUAL CURE.

Many persons are doubtless familiar with the nature of the extraordinary revolution in the cure of obesity which, within recent years, has been wrought by the original researches of that now eminent expert, Mr. F. Cecil Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. It is evident that the certainty, the rapidity, and the agreeable surroundings of his curative process have been recognised in a very large degree among ladies and gentlemen belonging to the highest social circles. Keen observers who have an opportunity of judging affirm, in the pages of Society papers and otherwise, that owing to the general employment of Mr. Russell's treatment, extreme obesity is becoming as much a thing of the past at fashionable gatherings as intoxication; and, no doubt, it will soon be regarded as nearly as disgraceful. The issue of an 18th edition of the author's singularly convincing little text-book, "Corpulency and the Cure," however, serves to indicate that the popularity of the system has now reached spheres far remote from those of West-end fashion. The book of 256 pages may be had, post free, by sending two penny stamps to Mr. Russell's offices as above; and it is worth the careful attention of those who wish to free themselves of a burden of fat, because extreme obesity terribly interferes with the energy necessary, in these days of competition, to make one's way in the world, or even to earn a very modest competency. A large proportion of the letters of Mr. Russell's grateful correspondents refer to their delight at being enabled—within a very brief period and without any irksome conditions implying semi-starvation—to attack their accustomed tasks with pleasure instead of wearied disgust, through being reduced to their normal weight. The popularity of the system is also largely due, doubtless, to the English hatred of mystery, which is utterly swept aside by Mr. Russell. He fully explains his *modus operandi*, and supplies the recipe for his preparation.—*Bicester Herald.*

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Answers to Correspondents.

In our issue of March 13th there appeared a story, "A Little Fisher Maiden." This we find is the copyright of the proprietors of *Household Words*. The Editor begs to express his regret that it should have appeared without permission.

H. T.—Columbus, I should say. More than seven hundred of his biographies have been written in various languages.

John.—No, Captain Webb was not the only person who attempted to swim Niagara Falls. There are over thirty men now living who have tried it.

Rainy Day puts the following question to me: "If you see an unknown lady unprotected in a heavy shower, ought you to offer her the loan of your umbrella?"———— It would be rather dangerous, wouldn't it? People are so very unscrupulous about umbrellas. Besides which, it would be (I am assuming that the little scene takes place in a big town) rather indiscreet. No lady would accept the offer, and consequently to make it would hardly be in the best of form. But who is to lay down the law? What could only be regarded as an act of courtly generosity coming from, we will say, an elderly clergyman would be regarded in a very different light if a young man were forcing the attention upon a girl.

Charlie.—British young gentlemen refer to their fathers as "dad," "the boss," or "the old man." In heathen countries they say "father," but then, of course, they are a long way behind the times.

Miss D. B.—"Chicken gloves" are gloves made in Limerick from the skins of very young calves. Each pair are packed inside a walnut shell, and fastened with a little silk riband.

D. D.—I am glad to hear you appreciate *Short Stories* so highly. Yes, the Picture Puzzle Competitions will be continued for some time yet.

Amateur Gardener.—The simplest way to make a hot-house is to leave a box of matches where the baby can get at them.

H. J. wants to know how far the average eye travels in a year's reading? ————It has been calculated, I believe, that in reading a million letters of the ordinary newspaper type the human eye travels a mile, and that the average man in an average lifetime goes through 2,300 miles of reading matter.

W. P.—The clouds are full of meaning as to the kind of weather we may expect. If their forms are soft, undefined, and feathery, it will be fine. If their edges are hard, and sharply defined, rain may be expected.

D. G.—Yes. The Mint is only able to coin one kind of metal at a time. If, for instance, there is a great demand for bronze coin, all coining of gold and silver must be suspended for the time being. Your story will receive the best consideration.

D. C.—Modern English dictionaries contain, I should think, between one and two hundred thousand words, but nine-tenths of these are seldom used.

B. B.—The elephant "Jumbo," of world-wide renown, was between three and four years of age when he was brought from the Jardin des Plantes, Paris, and installed in the Zoological Gardens at Regent's Park. He originally came from Africa.

I. M. T.—The deaf and dumb branch of the Salvation Army of which you speak is in Sweden.

R. T.—A great deal of the flowers we see offered for sale in the London streets during the winter come from the Scilly Islands, as well as from the South of France. Large farms are to be found in the Isles entirely devoted to the cultivation of flowers for export.

H. H.—Your case is not an exception. Some people have double rows of natural teeth.

I hope that you have not entirely ignored the article on the Fresh Air Fund which appeared in a recent issue of *S.S.* Remember that if you cannot afford a shilling or more send ninepence, which will cover the expenses of a day's outing for a child. The towns which will benefit by the scheme for this year are Aberdeen, Belfast, Birmingham, Blackburn, Bolton, Bradford, Bristol, Cardiff, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Hull, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Oldham, Portsmouth, Sheffield, Sunderland. I hope that every reader living in any one of these big centres will do his or her level best to get together sufficient money to help at least half-a-dozen little ones, for it is within their reach to become personally acquainted with the sordid misery which they are asked to alleviate. Subscription forms may be obtained from these offices by anybody who is sufficiently kindly disposed to render assistance, and I would ask ladies who care to help in the Fresh Air Fund street collection on May 22nd by taking a table to communicate with the secretary of the F.A.F., Pearson's, Henrietta Street, Strand, W.C.

F. S.—A wet silk handkerchief tied without folding over the face is a very good preventative of suffocation from the effects of smoke. It permits free breathing, and, at the same time, excludes the smoke from the lungs. Thanks for your kind wishes.

B.—China, I should say. There are more ducks there than in all the world outside of it. They are kept by the Celestials on every farm, on the public roads, on streets of cities, and on all lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and brooks in the country.

T. P.—Your poetry is not of such a high order of excellence as you seem to imagine. I do not wish to offend you, but you ask for my candid opinion—and there it is.

G. F.—There are, broadly speaking, about 13,000 different kinds of postage stamps in the world. I am afraid you would find it rather difficult to get a specimen of each kind. But you may be a millionaire, for all I know.

E. B.—The custom of writing letters on black-edged paper during the period of mourning is about 130 years old, and originally came from Italy. No; it is certainly not used to the extent it was a few years ago, and probably this may be owing to the prevailing opinion nowadays as to the uselessness of large expenditure in mourning requisites.

C. C.—Water does not contract when freezing, but expands.

A good many ideas in boot protectors have been produced from time to time. One of the best of these is a new rubber flange grip stud, easily affixed to the soles and heels of all kinds of foot-gear. The studs are made up of a piece of rubber, over which is a layer of leather, on top of which a round-shaped rubber stud is fixed. Messrs. Joseph Dawson & Sons, of London Wall, E.C., and Northampton, are the manufacturers.

Notice to Competitors.

In all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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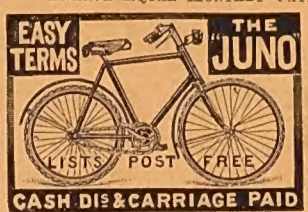

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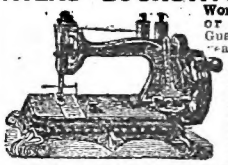

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